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HOUSEHOLD HORTICULTURE

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HOUSEHOLD HORTICULTURE

A GOSSIP ABOUT FLOWERS

BY

TOM AND JANE JERROLD



"Blessed be God for flowers,
For the bright, gentle, holy thoughts that breathe
From out their odorous beauty, like a wreath
Of sunshine on life's hours.'

London
CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY
1881
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PREFACE.

Not many years since, window gardening consisted in a few desultory attempts at ornamenting the outer dwelling by placing rows of plants upon the window sill. At the present time, household horticulture is an art ; an art the practice of which has been necessitated by that desire for the beautiful which is characteristic of human nature.

The more extended the area of towns and cities, the greater the necessity for attempting to replace by artificial means a little of that natural loveliness which disappears so rapidly at the advent of bricks and mortar ; and the following pages, the result of many years' practical experience, have been written with a desire to still further popularise the art of home gardening, by enabling those who have no surplus funds to expend on luxuries, as well as the rich, to obtain a window garden that shall be at one and the same time an object of interest and an ornament, a never-failing solace from the cares of daily life. Gray has truly said : " Happy are they who can create a rose or rear a honeysuckle;" but we would say more : we would say, Happy are they who can by care and skill make a plant grow where all else is barren ; happy are they who can induce a flower to bloom, however lowly a weed, where its natural grace and beauty—for even weeds are graceful and beautiful—will impart a charm to surroundings of depressing dreariness.

TOM AND JANE JERROLD.

July 1881.

HOUSEHOLD HORTICULTURE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

Who would not, if it were possible, dwell for ever in a region so delightful, so full of beauty, so redolent of fragrance, as Flora's domain?—a kingdom where trouble seems never to enter, where peace and tranquillity should have an endless reign, where all the paths should be strewn with roses, where we find flowers of every season, for all times; flowers greeting with smiles the advent of spring; flowers breathing out sweet essences at the kiss of the summer sun; flowers interwoven in the golden garlands of autumn, and flowers braving the withering frowns of inclement winter.

Every season, yea, every month, we may visit Flora's domain and find some sweet blossom to interest, some opening bud to observe in its gradual unfolding.

“ In the cottage of the rudest peasant,
In ancestral homes, whose crumbling towers,
Speaking of the past unto the present,
Tell us of the ancient games of flowers.

“ In all places, then, and in all seasons,
Flowers expand their light and soul-like wings,
Teaching us by most persuasive reasons
How akin they are to human things.”

And the more we study them, the more we cherish them, the more endeared do they become to us. We regard their development with somewhat of the affection with which we watch the growth of a child ; and as the love of a mother is often greatest for the crippled or sickly offspring whose life is a perpetual source of care and anxiety to her, so do we see the enthusiastic horticulturist tend with the most unremitting pains that plant which least repays his care.

Many of the sweetest blossoms are almost of spontaneous growth ; once started into life they thrive and bloom under the most adverse circumstances ; but where the surroundings are propitious to their well-being they grow and blossom and form a very bower of beauty, wherein we may dwell and contemplate their charms, aye, and more than their charms, for in language as true as it is beautiful has not the poet told us how akin are flowers to human things.

“ Brilliant hopes, all woven in gorgeous tissues,
Flaunting gaily in the golden light ;
Large desires with most uncertain issues.
Tender wishes blossoming at night.

“ These in flowers and men are more than seeming ;
Workings are they of the self-same powers
Which the poet, in no idle dreaming,
Seeth in himself and in the flowers.”

But Flora’s domain is not alone a paradise for dreams and reveries. The Sybarite and the idler may enjoy its beauties, but it requires the industry of the worker and the experience of practice to create a kingdom for the goddess in inauspicious places. Flora’s favourites will revel on the mountain side, clothe the valley with love-

liness, beautify unfrequented places, and “waste their sweetness on the desert air;” but they must be wooed to the haunts of men, caressed into growth, and tended with love and care. It is only thus we can ensure their life, and it should be our aim to surround our homes with as many as possible of the captivating beauties, for their very presence adds a charm to the most sumptuous apartment or sheds a grace which half hides the nakedness of poverty-invaded homes.

During weary winter weather, debarred in a great measure from the open garden, we must solace ourselves with those of Flora’s train which blossom within doors. Nor need our list be very limited. Science and art have combined, and while the sad coloured winter sky of English towns hangs over our heads, within our dwellings we may be enjoying the contemplation of tropical magnificence, and inhaling perfumes that waft our thoughts to the gorgeous islands of Southern Seas.

Of all the health-giving, pleasure-promoting, occupations for leisure hours, the cultivation of plants seems the most adapted to the female sex. It is equally agreeable and suitable to the Duchess who glories in a parterre, rich in all the glowing colours of flowers belonging to a semi-tropical habitat, inured at great expense of money and skill to our variable climate, and the cottager’s wife, who steals a few moments from the almost overwhelming cares of her daily life to attend to the “posies” which deck the few feet square in front of her cottage windows, the only spot which the utilitarian ideas of her hard working husband allows to be spared from the ground sacred to cabbages and potatoes.

Of late years a growing taste has been evinced for the beauties of Nature, not only in the cultivation of flowers, but in the use of them as decorations for the most costly reunions. It is a taste which cannot become too popular ; and, commencing as it has done with the "upper ten," we hope to see it gradually taking root until it establishes itself throughout the very poorest ranks of life.

Other fashions are mostly artificial and fleeting, but a love of flowers seems implanted in every female breast, since the time when Eve decked her bower with the exquisite blossoms that grew spontaneously in the garden of Paradise, as a fitting welcome for her heaven-sent guest.

But, indeed, that which has been sung by Milton, and praised by Shakespeare needs no further eulogium. To write in praise of an art which is coeval with the progenitors of our race, and which has been more or less successfully cultivated since the beginning of the world, were, indeed, to try and paint the lily ; suffice it then to say, that gardening may be pursued with pleasure and profit at all seasons by persons of both sexes and all ages ; it is as often the delight of the young as the solace of the old, and is truly a pastime and a pleasure "not for an age, but for all time."

When we reach middle life, and the interests of the fashionable world begin to pall upon our senses, when we feel inclined to exclaim with the preacher, "vanity, vanity, all is vanity," then we turn to the garden with redoubled pleasure, our plants, our flowers ever were and ever will be a source of gratification ; for whatever disappointments, whatever slights and rubs we may get in the world, we only become the more assured "that

INTRODUCTION.

Nature never did deceive the heart that loved her "
And the older we get the more endeared to us become
the pure pleasures to be derived from researches into
those vast fields of knowledge and interest which ever
lie open to us in the study of Nature.

CHAPTER II.

ARTISTIC GARDENING.

THE love of Nature, which specially characterizes our times, is growing day by day, and becoming the expression of individual taste and of personal bias in new forms and new directions. As a natural consequence, gardening as an art takes divers developments ; it is an imitation of Nature, but an imitation which receives in its expression the impress of the human mind which has planned it. At the present time, the most vivid expression of a love of horticulture is in the pre-Raphaelitish display of masses of crude colour in such close juxtaposition that they tend to heighten the garishness of each other.

Among masters of horticulture and trained students a more pleasing, because less glaring, style is beginning to prevail ; the mass of the people, however, uninitiated in horticultural science, uneducated in taste, follow day by day and year by year in certain grooves, from which it seems almost impossible they can emerge ; and when a taste for gardening develops itself, its expression almost invariably takes the form of copying some neighbour's floral accessories. Here and there evidence of an original mind and a pure taste crop up ; but, as a rule, sameness characterizes all attempts at horticultural display in the flower gardens, and in the windows and conservatories of town houses.

When the Great Exhibition of 1851 called forth the labours of foreign as well as home workmen, a new era in ornamental art work may be said to have dawned upon England, and a portion of its light fell upon garden accessories; from that time we began to lose sight of the rude and clumsily made window boxes, painted green, which were wont to be placed upon the window sills of enthusiastic town gardeners, and the still uglier, for they were larger and therefore more obtrusive, tiers of green boards which did duty as ornamental flower stands.

As well as utility, beauty began to be studied, and it was soon found possible to amalgamate them. The French who invariably take the lead where art work is employed, originated the pretty *jardinières* formed of Tulip wood inlaid with porcelain pictures of Watteau subjects and supported on stands of ebony and ormolu. These elegant plant receptacles were appropriate and pleasing in well appointed *salons*. A smaller and no less elegant form is the ebony stand for holding a single potted plant; but unfortunately, in designing the ornamental china pot, in which as a rule the common clay one is placed, good taste and appropriate design are not so apparent. The material, form, and ornamentation of flower pots for indoor use might well engage the attention of some æsthetically minded individual.

For outdoor work and general purposes it might perhaps be difficult to find anything to supersede the old red clay pot, but it does seem strange that something more ornamental has not been invented for the indoor cultivation of plants. China vases have of late been largely employed, but they are not perfect. Designers seem to play a never ending game of follow-

my-leader in all ornamentation of flower pots and garden accessories.

As far back as we can remember almost the sole form of art brought into requisition for the adornment of anything employed in ornamental horticulture has been the painting of flowers and foliage, or the modelling of them in relief; in fact, so universal has this style of decoration become, that tazzas, flower vases of every description, *jardinières*, &c., are all embellished in the same manner, which is certainly not according to the dictates of artistic taste.

Flowers designed and coloured by the hand of man are after all but poor imitations of Nature's handiwork, and when we wish to display either to the greatest advantage we should keep them apart.

As an instance of the want of taste and appropriateness of design in ornamentation, we may refer to a costly china dessert service which lately came under our notice; each piece was painted by hand, and had for subject some particular fruit. Had the artist made choice of flowers and foliage as a subject the idea would have been pretty, and, if not novel, appropriate.

Flowers, leaves and fruits are a natural combination, but to paint fruit upon plates intended to hold Nature's productions appears to us to argue a want of taste and a paucity of original ideas which should be impossible at the present day, when every town possesses an art school, and students enjoy exceptional advantages.

Floral designs are in keeping with many other objects, but they are most certainly out of place on receptacles in which it is intended to place the natural living plant.

Glaring instances of the unsuitability of painted

flowers on window boxes designed for the reception of living plants, may be seen during the season, where gaudy presentments of floral semblances on the plant receptacles challenge comparison with the delicate tints of the living flowers above them.

An unobtrusive drawing of scroll work, or a simple key border would impart much better effect.

In fact brilliantly coloured tiles, which are now so commonly in use for facing window boxes, might well give place to the same material of a more uniform and soberer hue ; it is the growing plants and living flowers which should be the attraction, not the vessel in which they are placed. If we cannot have exactly what is required, let us at least discard the old fashioned, inappropriate style of covering all plant receptacles with designs of flowers and leaves, and new and more artistic tints and shapes will soon be evolved out of some brain capable of original conceptions.

Rustic work in wood or stoneware is generally good and appropriate, save in sumptuously furnished mansions or rooms where a severe style of appointment would suggest its being out of keeping with its surroundings ; but there is a material which might be made into forms to suit the mansion as well as the cottage, and which we imagine would only be costly when elaborate designs and much workmanship were involved in the manufacture. We allude to the fashionable red clay ware, now so largely made at Torquay.

The colour of this material, less obtrusive than that of the ordinary flower pot when the latter is new, combines and harmonizes most happily not only with growing plants but also with cut flowers. At present we have not found any great variety in the designs in

which this ware is sold, but it might be of almost universal use; it would lend itself readily to any form, is as easily cleaned as a china teacup, and not being extravagant in price, would become a suitable ornament in every household.

As there are gardens and gardens, so there are gardeners and gardeners, gardening and gardening.

Between the forecourt of a suburban cottage and the grounds of princely Chatsworth, between the poor "frozen out" day labourer and the master of the art of horticulture, there exists a difference as great and marked as between the various styles of gardening.

We have passed through many phases of the art more or less distinguished by certain peculiarities, we have had the useful as well as the ornamental, the ornamental and the useful combined ; we have had the severely simple and the highly ornate, the architectural and the natural, and, finally, that is to say at the present time —we may be said to have the artistic.

How far the present fashion in horticulture deserves the appellation we will presently discover, but here, let it be fully understood, our remarks are not meant to apply to extensive gardens placed under the charge of professors of the art of horticulture ; the artistic gardening, or rather the style which appears to lay claim to the title, is that displayed in the small area of villa gardens, the floral arrangements of town houses, &c.

First as to the meaning of artistic. In the sense in which it is applied to horticulture, it is surely meant to imply the elevating of the occupation of the gardener into an art, into work on which the labourer shall bring to bear all the resources of knowledge at his command, the evidence of such knowledge to be displayed in the

laying out and planting of grounds in the most pleasing and suitable manner ; so that, considering the whole, we shall find uniformity without sameness, diversity without heterogeneousness, each part being not only good and beautiful in itself, but dovetailing into the whole so as to heighten the general effect.

In fact, artistic gardening should consist in bringing to bear upon the subject all the fruits of experience, study, and observation possible, so that in the outcome of knowledge, in the practical evidence, in the garden itself, or in the numerous minor portions of it, such as window, balcony, or *jardinière*, there shall be nothing incongruous, nothing to shock the most fastidious taste, nothing which brings heterogeneous subjects into a proximity which detracts from the beauty of all.

On looking around the metropolis and observing what goes on about us, we cannot but be struck by the universal diffusion of a love of flowers, as evidenced by the general efforts to grow them somewhere and somehow. With this widely awakened taste for beauty has arisen a development of decorative garden accessories which are employed without thought, and therefore without fitness. Such are the window-boxes of virgin-cork displayed on stuccoed houses. Is it possible to find anything more incongruous than the flat imitation stone surface, the severe pillared porticos, the handsome expansive plate-glass windows, with an adornment of rustic beauty ? It is a misplacement of beauty which jars upon the senses in a manner similar to that which might be felt were we to behold the picture of some village belle taken from the picturesque yet ordinary surroundings of her daily life, and placed in a modern drawing-room ; the face and figure of the rustic beauty

framed in an environment of woods and fields and the accessories of country life would appear to the best advantage, while such a figure as the principal attraction of a *salon* would be out of place and absurd—a fit subject for satire, a theme for ridicule; the charm of face and figure would be utterly lost from the incongruity of the surroundings, as the rugged form of rustic window-boxes is when placed on modern imitation Italian architecture.

This is but one of the many phases in which artistic gardening belies its name: it is to be found all around us, in greater or less degree. At one time its most glaring form was the painting of railings, garden seats, arbours, any, indeed, of the adjuncts of the pleasure ground, a deep uniform green colour; this fashion, happily, is dying out, we have learnt from the French to employ a deep red brown tint as the most suitable to be used for wood and iron work in gardens. It were well we should only go thus far, not copying our neighbours in the profuse amount of gilding employed by them, nor following the too prevalent fashion of making garden pavilions of such a form and of so many hues that they have the appearance of abortive attempts at Eastern pagodas and miniature minarets.

To return to English gardening. Although we do not see the improprieties of little mounds, little pavilions, little fountains, and little grottos in a space some few yards square—all of which are so commonly found around a *maisonnette* at Auteuil, Passy, or other village outskirt of Paris—yet in many instances the laying out and planting of a small garden is as inartistic here as it is in France. There, space is frittered away, and by attempting too much all is lost; here the reverse is

generally the case. Given a villa garden enclosed within brick walls, how seldom is any attempt made to improve the ungardenesque character of the fence, or, by judicious planting of suitable subjects, depriving the enclosure of the hard outline of a formal square? As a rule, three narrow, level borders follow the line of wall, the fourth side of the square being formed by the dwelling-house; four straight paths and a square of lawn complete the laying out of the villa garden; the summer planting follows the fashion of the day, and carpet-beds and ribbon-borders give to the ground the glory of brilliant colouring for a few weeks. Another form of laying out is that where life-size statues and gigantic tazzas stand obtrusively out on liliputian lawns and diminutive terraces, or, interspersed amid attenuated shrubs, only add to the general *outré* appearance and dreariness of the whole.

Gleaming white statuary beneath the sunny skies and amid the dense myrtle-groves of Italy, in conjunction with the classic architecture and æsthetic memories of the country, is appropriate and therefore beautiful; but such statuary, smoke-begrimed and out of place within the walls of the limited area of a suburban villa garden, is inappropriate and ridiculous.

Since a part of the Horticultural Gardens at South Kensington was first laid out with coloured sands, this style, of what we may term imitation gardening, has become a rage with some people, and we have seen villa gardens in which, during winter, the beds have been laid down with broken stone and chemical refuse in geometric patterns.

Such gardens always remind us of the miniature grounds laid out by the children on the seashore, which

are planted with cut flowers ; such child's play has, indeed, more of the true ring of a love of Nature and plants about it than the idiosyncracy which delights in parterres of coloured stones. A sincere horticulturist would find more real pleasure in cultivating the veriest wayside weed than in laying-out such gardens, which at the best are not so interesting as the well-designed pattern and artistically blended tints of a parlour carpet.



FIG. 1.

CHAPTER III.

FLORAL LONDON.

LONDON, with its twelve miles round included, offers so great a diversity of aspects that we may be acquainted with certain phases of its appearance and ignore any others. To know the whole would require the observation of a Newton, the descriptive abilities of a Macaulay, and the pedestrian powers of the Wandering Jew.

And in regard to its wonderful kaleidoscopic variety of interesting pictures, it is perfectly true that each person sees only in regard to them that which his eye brings with it the power of seeing.

The man of fashion finds in the metropolis only an *embarras de richesses*, palatial mansions, sumptuous surroundings, endless streams of carriages filled with lovely women, and drawn by the finest horses in the world ; the professional man looks upon it as the centre where all that is noblest and highest in human intelligence is to be met with ; the trader sees it only as the finest mart in the world ; while the misanthrope and the philanthropist, blinded by the glare of gold and fleeting fashion, see only the London which is black with crime and dark with misery.

But of late years our city has undergone another change. It was a short time ago but a city of bricks

and mortar, where, however warm the hearts which beat behind its dingy walls and soot-begrimed windows, there was no outward indication of difference of sentiment among its millions of inhabitants. Now, even outwardly, London has put on a different aspect, it has become a city of summer flowers, a floral London, where the beauties of the garden are transplanted to balcony, window sill, and even to house top, where we may contemplate the graceful foliage of sub-tropical vegetation, inhale the perfumes of Persia and Araby, look on the glowing buds which owe their origin to a tropical sun, and yet not wander beyond the magic circle of London and its suburban districts. The change has been gradual but not slow, and is growing year by year. Beginning with the few persons whose means were sufficiently ample to prove no bar to the accomplishment of their desires, the florist saw the first indication of the national taste which was aroused, and which grew the stronger the more it was sought to satisfy it ; and the struggle to give to formal houses and streets a touch of beauty by the introduction of a few living plants was met, in every direction, by efforts to supply the craving for flowers ; and so, for those months of the year during which we enjoy a maximum of sunshine and a minimum of smoke and fog, we have London with its floral aspect.

Among the many indications of the natural taste a few great landmarks stand out conspicuously—the parks of the metropolis form a large and important feature in floral London ; by degrees they have become not only umbrageous verdant resting places for tired travellers, weary of close streets and overcrowded workshops, this they have been to generations of our forefathers, but to

us of the present time they are more ; they are veritable schools of horticulture. The trees afford as grateful a shade, the turf is no less green, and the pleasantness of the one and the beauty of the other have been enhanced by the flower beds which gem the latter, and make parterres where the professional gardener may study the blending or contrasting of colours, and where the amateur may receive instruction, and, by observation, gain a knowledge of what will grow, what will flourish, and what will become luxuriant in the trying atmosphere of densely populated places, places where man has fought against nature so effectually as almost to have obliterated any traces of that vegetation which in less civilized localities clothes the bosom of earth as with a mantle, and springs spontaneous from every soil.

Each point of the compass is represented by special features. The west glows with plants reared under glass and tended with unremitting care during dreary winter by experts in floricultural art ; the north gradually melts into the freedom of nature when it reaches "bleak Hampstead's swarthy moor," or joins the undulating hills where forest trees give breadth and shade to vast meadows, which have remained unchanged in their general character for centuries. The south and east have each floral features of their own.

Not only in public parks and nursery grounds, but in the less known but no less pleasing displays of window gardening, and in the efforts made to form parterres of varied beauty in the limited spaces called by ambitious builders, given to euphuism, "front gardens."

The very early summer is the season of flowers as of fashion ; for the children of Flora, like the children of

Eve, soon fade and droop after some weeks of London existence. Both have to contend against an unnatural life, and cannot endure it for any length of time; indeed, by the end of June, the trees and shrubs, denizens all the year round of London squares and pent up gardens, have lost their freshness, and a season of decline sets in, when the barely developed foliage, choked and dried up with dust and soot, falls prematurely to the ground.

The brilliant flowers of which we have so great a variety at this season will bloom even in overcrowded London until late in autumn, if but a little care be taken in supplying them with sufficient moisture at the roots and in keeping the foliage clean with refreshing shower-baths.

A would-be utilitarian once said, "I do not see any use in flowers; what good do they do? and what practical benefit is to be derived from the cultivation of merely ornamental plants?"

In those days we had learnt to regard flowers only as beautiful luxuries, gifts of lavish nature, sent, over and above the bountiful provision of necessaries, to add grace and beauty to the surface of the earth, and to teach us by their sweetness to have thoughts beyond the materialistic requirements of every day life; but now we have learnt that plants and flowers are not only beautifiers of this world, but powerful agents in rendering it a healthy abiding place for man, for they are nature's disinfectants, purifiers of unhealthy air.

When we fancy we have made a new discovery, we often find that it is but the uncovering of old truths well known many hundred years since; for during the second century, when the plague raged in Italy, and the panic-stricken multitudes crowded into Rome, the

physicians bade them encamp at Laurentum, because there the sweet bay tree grew in great abundance, and the inhalation of its perfume was a preservative against infection. Our immediate forefathers also believed that the aroma exhaled from different plants was beneficial in preventing the spread of contagious diseases, and lavender and southernwood, rosemary and rue, were found plentifully planted around each cottage door.

In Holland, some years ago, it is said, a whole village escaped the miasmatic fever, in consequence of a large marshy area having been sown with the common sunflower.

At the present day Bournemouth has become a most popular resort of fashion, because of the beneficial effects produced on invalids by the air loaded with the health-giving resinous odours of the pine trees. The pine-scented baths of Germany are also in great favour as certain remedies in many chronic ailments.

The efficacy of aromatic plants for this purpose is indeed no new discovery, for about thirty years ago the gardener at Chiswick House was noted for his management of pot-herbs, and for vapour baths medicated by herbs ; nor was he alone in appreciating the value of perfumed waters as refreshing agents after great or unusual fatigue, for in many districts "hay-tea," as it is called, has long been highly esteemed for purposes of ablution, and it is said that, however weary and foot-sore, however fatigued a traveller may be, a bath of hay-tea will restore his exhausted energies and give him strength for renewed exertions.

The wonderful efficacy of the bath is doubtless owing to the sweet-scented vernal grass, which gives so distinguishing a perfume to new-mown hay. c 2

But to return to London. It is a well ascertained fact that growing plants extract carbonic acid gas from the air, thus aiding in preserving that proportion in its elements which enables it to sustain life; let us therefore cultivate flowering plants for their beautiful blossoms, scented ones for their perfume, and climbing and trailing ones to cover unsightly bricks and mortar.

No one need be deterred from attempting to grow plants in London, for there are here and there instances of the marvels which may be done in the limited space of an area, or on the narrow boundary of an ordinary window sill. In a square, in the western district, for several seasons past there has been a perfect bower of beauty, for the area in front of the kitchen windows has been literally full of beautiful plants; the dense vine-like foliage of the Virginian Creeper covers the unsightliness of the walls; that most general and gorgeous of all our town thriving plants, the Scarlet Geranium, gives boldness and breadth of colour, while less showy plants, Lobelia, Nasturtiums, Calceolarias, Petunias, &c., are interspersed with sweet scented Musks, Heliotropes, and a graceful finish is given to the whole by numerous hanging baskets, containing suitable trailing subjects, the tasteful arrangement of numerous sub-tropical plants, such as hardy Palms, Cycads, &c., finding a place, and lending an elegance to this—if we may so term it—garden below stairs. The balcony above is also filled with plants, and luxuriant Ivy-Geraniums and the no less effective but much commoner Money-wort hang together in graceful festoons from the interstices of the iron railings.

It is not only the ultra-fashionable quarters of the great world of London which glow with flowers; a

peep down an area in the neighbourhood of Tottenham Court Road last June disclosed a standard rose in bloom, with a pretty flower bed around the base of the tree. If roses will put forth blooms, what might not be done with less delicate objects of horticultural care? many of which are so hardy as almost to defy atmospheric impurities and unskilful tending; indeed, the above are but two instances out of many which might be cited, and only serve to show what might be accomplished with a little taste in every London street, each person arranging his miniature garden according to his means and the capabilities of the situation. The gardens on the Thames Embankment are examples well worth following, for there the marvellous effects accomplished under adverse circumstances appear all the more wonderful from the great contrast presented by the present aspect of the place to that common a few years ago. Now we have flourishing young plane trees, which every year cast a wider and more grateful shade—beds of bright flowers, and smooth expanses of cool green turf to gladden and refresh the eye—whereas, a few summers back, the receding tide left only black slippery mud and stranded coal barges, as appropriate ornaments befitting the banks of the finest river of the largest city of the world.

CHAPTER IV.

PROFESSIONAL ENTHUSIASM.

WHEN the cobbler exclaimed "There's nothing like leather," he was an enthusiast of the first order, and it is certain that those who are possessed with a like feeling are the very persons who succeed beyond all others in their several professions. Enthusiasm is the divine afflatus which creates the master of his art, and raises him above the weary plodder in well-trodden ways. Horticulturists, or to speak in more homely language, gardeners, have been enthusiasts since the days when the "grand old gardener" first cultivated the soil to the present time, and their enthusiasm has done so much for their art, that it has raised it to the present high position it holds as the first, most civilizing, and refining pursuit of the age.

It was the enthusiasm for his art which kept Andrew Fairservice twenty-four years "fighting" to use his own language, "with the wild beasts of Ephesus," and caused him to stand up for his professional honour the moment his abilities were called in question. "But nae doubt I should understand my trade of horticulture, seeing I was bred in the parish of Dreepdally, where they raise lang kale under glass, and force the early nettles for their spring kale; and, to speak truth, I hae been flitting every term these four-and-twenty years, but when the time comes there's aye something

to saw that I should like to see sAWN, or something to maw that I would like to see mAWN, or something to ripe that I should like to see ripen, and sae I e'en daiker on wi' the family frae year's end to year's end ;" and so, in spite of adverse politics, different religion, and distasteful habits, the worthy Andrew stayed with the " ha' folk " until he found an excellent opportunity of bettering himself.

Andrew's case is much like that of all other cultivators of the soil ; the very practice of the art of horticulture creates an enthusiasm for it. Once gardening-work is commenced it goes on from year to year in a delightful circle of enjoyment, a cycle of labours that have no beginning and no end ; the fading of one favourite inaugurates the birth of another, and we have ever something to live for, something we desire to see.

Cobbett, disappointed in political life, imprisoned, exiled, could forget his misfortunes while he pursued with ardent love and hourly care the cultivation of his garden and his farm ; nor was his affection for the ground he had worked in as a boy ever diminished ; the place was in his later years described by him with an enthusiastic admiration of its beauties, which marked at every word his belief that it was the very beau ideal of an English garden.

But beyond the professional enthusiasts for horticulture, as a whole, there are others whose cares and affections become centred upon a single subject, and who, indeed, end by a devout belief that " there's nothing like leather."

Some years ago the amateur of Tulips was *par excellence* the professional enthusiast. The Tulip mania in Holland, and Alphonse Karr's humorous description of

the rival fanciers, who lived next door to each other, will not allow the remembrance to die out. At the present day we have, doubtless, many passionate cultivators of florists' flowers, but they have extended their affections, and each has made a *spécialité* of a plant round which his thoughts and hopes centre, and the perfecting of which he looks to as the *ultima thule* of his desires, the goal of his ambition.

One person devotes his energies to the propagation of numerous varieties of certain species, another to the enlargement of the flower or development of diversified foliage; while some, combining philanthropy with business, cultivate a fruit or vegetable, and believe that it alone is a panacea for all the ills—bodily ones at least—that flesh is heir to. As an instance, we may quote the case of a well-known grower of filberts, who said—and this in all sincerity—that he believed the filbert an excellent and nutritious article of food (which, no doubt, it is), and that did he by any chance feel ill, which was very seldom, he took a stroll in the grounds and dined himself upon nuts, which never failed to restore his health and give him renewed strength. While he could eat as many filberts as he pleased there was no need to obtain medical advice, nor pharmaceutical preparation; in his estimation there was nothing like nuts.

Tomatoes are a great culinary delicacy, deserving all the good things said of them by our American cousins, and are, doubtless, in a fair way to gain a due appreciation of their merits here; yet, fifteen years ago, when tomatoes were “caviare to the general,” professional enthusiasm had placed this fruit on as lofty a pedestal as that gained by the filbert, a successful cultivator

always having recourse to them as an aliment when ill-health or over-fatigue resulted in a distaste for other food.

But beyond the professional enthusiasts who combine, as it were, philanthropy with business, by cultivating vegetables in such quantities and to such perfection that they become dainties within the reach of all, there are numbers of amateur cultivators with whom horticulture becomes a ruling passion, and who generally select as the object of their care some subject but little affected by ordinary gardeners. One such concentrated his mind upon perfecting the sunflower and the ripening of Indian corn beneath an English sun ; nothing could exceed the ardour with which the germination of the seed was watched, the patient attention given day by day to the growth of each plant, the care with which every intruding insect was removed, and the delight with which the putting forth of buds was regarded.

Under judicious treatment and unremitting care the sunflowers became leviathans, their massive heads of bloom, although supported upon stems proportionately thick and strong, losing the power of bearing out the poetical description of turning on the setting sun the same look which had greeted his uprising.

For the Indian corn, the more it was suggested that it would not do, the more the amateur persevered in growing it, and faith with work was, as it always is, in due time rewarded. Who shall paint the anxiety with which each swelling stem was watched, the delight with which the appearance of the handsome plume of male flowers at the top of the plant was greeted, the admiration which was displayed when the tender silken

filaments—graceful heralds of the coming grain—were first seen hanging over the enwrapping sheaths ; enthusiasm reached its culminating point when the fully ripened cobs rewarded the cultivator, and proved that maize may be successfully grown even in our uncertain climate.

In all these instances enthusiastic prosecution of an object gained its own reward, but there is an ardour which hopes against conviction, which persists in a vain pursuit, although the end must be despair. The florist, who devotes his energies to the obtaining of a *blue* rose, is like the philosopher who wastes his substance in a search for the elixir of life ; but we may bear kindly with the Don Quixotes of the profession for the sake of those who, combining enthusiasm with scientific and laboriously attained knowledge, have become benefactors of mankind, and whose "foot-prints on the sands of time" will remain to point out to future generations the path of honour and distinction gained by persevering endeavour and self-abnegation.

CHAPTER V.

POSSIBILITIES OF WINDOW GARDENING.

LIKE many others of the ornamental arts, window gardening has doubtless made vast strides during the past twenty years; yet, much as has already been done, more lies within our reach. We can scarcely be said to have begun to think for ourselves, we are all too apt to follow the stereotyped plans of furnishing florists, for as each season comes round and brings with it a certain variety of plants in bloom, these make their appearance in the shops, and afterwards are distributed throughout the sitting-rooms of the flower-loving community.

Amateurs—employing the word as meaning enthusiasts—who cultivate plants from a pure love of the occupation, might, however, by the exercise of a little thought and some attentive study of the subject, conceive something fresh in artistic window gardening, and thus inaugurate a new and more varied style of indoor plant decoration. In general a good effect is lost by not making sufficient use of masses of foliage. This is especially the case during winter; yet there are numbers of plants that would flourish, even in a sitting-room window, all through the dreary months of December, January, and February; and should March, with its wealth of bloom, find them a little *passées*, they could be set aside for a season of rest.

For this purpose we have found hardy Ferns excellent; periodical and ample watering and washing have not only kept them in health and freshness, but even induced the growth of new fronds. And here let us remark upon the vital importance to the plants of judicious watering. In dry weather, when watering is a very important matter, it should be borne in mind that a good soaking once a week or so—a soaking that penetrates thoroughly, the water finding its way to every part of the root of the plant—is most beneficial, but that watering a *little*, every day or so, giving homeopathic doses, is an operation much better left alone, for much more harm than good is likely to result from such a practice, inasmuch as watering in such quantity as to moisten the surface only causes growth of fibres near the top, the slight moisture not being sufficient to nourish them, but, on the contrary, the young tender growth of fibres being within reach of the burning sun must result in exhaustion to the plant. Water, therefore, should at all times be administered with a liberal hand, that it may soak and percolate through thoroughly, as a long shower of rain will do, and the growth of roots will be produced and encouraged in their natural position, going deeper after the nourishment they affect, and will thus be enabled to withstand any occasional neglect.

The Ficus Elastica, or Indiarubber, prince of window plants, is so well known and generally grown that it seems scarcely necessary to refer to it, except to say that in grouping plants for the window we have found two, three, or more young plants much more useful than the tall specimens so commonly seen in rooms.

Begonias are a host in themselves; the form and colour of the leaves are so beautiful and so various that, with a number of these easily-cultivated and handsome plants, we could scarcely be said to miss blossom, summer or winter; in flower or out of flower, the plants are always pretty and highly ornamental.

In all seasons, and at all times, foliage should form the *pièce de résistance* of a window garden. In nature we nowhere find, save perhaps, during the time of fruit blossom, the flowers exceeding the foliage in bulk and importance. Taking nature as our guide, we should always keep a prevailing tint of green; it is cool and refreshing to the eye, and a fitting and advantageous background for the flowers. These latter need not be very numerous; they may be small in number, but great in effect; they should be like the plums in the grocer's pudding, the crowning flavour, as it were, the *bonnes bouches*, not the solid foundation. As an instance of the necessity of a due proportion of foliage and flowers to obtain a pleasing effect, we may cite a window which came under our notice last season; in it were at least fifty Hyacinths in full bloom. To say the *coup d'œil* was not so good, is speaking quite within bounds, all idea of gardenesque effect was entirely lost, the bulbs were growing in old-fashioned hyacinth glasses, these being staged on a wooden stand of tiers of straight dark green boards. Taking the bulbs separately, many of the flowers were extremely fine, but on the whole, the effect was not pretty, in fact, at a distance of a few paces the whole thing looked no better than a collection of the paper flowers now so much in vogue.

A little artistic arrangement with plants of full

foliage and graceful habit would have rendered this cottage window a very bower of beauty.

When we are approaching the end of the second month of the year, nature is making slow but sure progress, buds generally are visibly swelling, and in sheltered favourable situations are bursting into leaf and blossom. It will be better if they do so but slowly, for a too mild February is often the precursor of a comparatively flowerless, fruitless year. But while we are waiting for our pets of the parterre to smile upon us, we have some of their floral sisters delighting our hearts and eyes within doors, not only in vast conservatories, but on the warm side of many an humble window, where the possibilities of gardening appear to advance each season as the taste for growing plants in rooms becomes more and more widespread ; yet great as has been the general improvement in household horticulture, it was rather startling some three years ago to see announced a Working Man's Winter Show. We have become accustomed to floricultural exhibitions, of all descriptions, from the magnificent displays at the Botanic Gardens, Regent's Park, down to the village, and even the children's flower shows, but most of these take place in spring, summer, and autumn. Winter exhibitions, after the chrysanthemum season is over, are few and far between, and, as a rule, limited to the display of hothouse reared blooms in florists' houses.

A goodly show of flowers and foliage in a sitting-room window during midwinter is a consummation devoutly to be wished for but seldom attained.

Window gardening, worthy of the name, is seldom seen save during the spring and early summer. The blazing sun of July and August is inimical to its beauty,

which wanes considerably during autumn ; the winter, except in the homes of the wealthy, is a season when the *ne plus ultra* of window-gardening is represented by a collection of straggling, almost leafless, geraniums and fuchsias hanging on to existence—to quote Sidney Smith—"by the skin of their teeth."

Remembering all this, a winter flower show, in which the plants grown in the homes of working men were to be the main attraction, appeared a novel speculation. The result was good. The entries, however, were not, as we were led to imagine from the posters, limited to working men's families, but embraced all classes, anyone in fact, who had paid subscription to the Home Encouragement Society. Other things were on view besides plants and flowers, such as models of buildings, needlework of all descriptions, new laid eggs, poultry for the table, &c., but as the flower show was the attraction which drew us to the schoolroom in the Portobello Road, Notting Hill, so it chiefly interested us. Although so early in the season, (the last week in February) Dutch bulbs formed by far the major part of the show of flowers ; indeed, as far as bloom was concerned, it was confined almost solely to this class of plants.

Many of the Hyacinths were extremely fine, one or two Polyanthus Narcissus splendid. The Crocuses were not good, their appearance being poor and grassy, the foliage, greatly drawn, had fallen over, imparting a sad and dejected air. Amateurs should always bear in mind the important fact that Snowdrops and Crocuses do not flourish when grown altogether in rooms ; when required for window gardens, they should be lifted from the open ground as soon as the flower

buds appear above the soil, and potted up in clumps, the bulbs having been planted in the open ground in autumn. Among the foliage plants we noticed several fine Dracenas, a Ficus Elastica, or Indianrubber plant, and a really splendid specimen of lemon-scented Geranium. All these were well-grown, handsome plants, and better evidence of the cultivator's skill than the bulbs, inasmuch as the latter are but temporary occupants of the sitting-room during the short season of bloom, while the former are, as a rule, permanent occupants of the window.

Even taking the show as a whole, it displayed but a mere fraction of the possibilities of window gardening, but was a gratifying exhibition, as it proved that the taste for cultivating plants within rooms is not limited to one class or station, but permeates the whole nation. The addresses on the greater number of exhibits went far to show that only unremitting care and attention could have produced such good results with plants grown in the uncongenial quarters of back streets and built up neighbourhoods.

As a direct contrast to the bald display of flowers already alluded to, we may note an exquisitely beautiful arrangement of Primroses and Ferns in a moss basket (*Fig. 2*) which we received as a present from Hastings in the very early spring, before the biting March winds came and "checked all our buds from blowing." When first received the flowers had all the freshness of the country from which they came; the ferns, of the commonest and hardiest descriptions, formed a graceful and fitting *entourage* to the delicately scented pale Primrose.



FIG. 2.

To keep the plants in a growing condition, the roots were just covered with the clayey soil out of which they had been taken; by immersing the whole basket in water, so that the latter reached the roots of every plant, but did not reach the flowers, the *jardinière* was kept fresh and blooming for more than a month; when the want of air and light began to tell visibly on the health of the plants, they were taken out and planted in a shady rockery, or wild garden, where they rapidly recovered tone and colour. In considering the suitability of plants for window culture, we must regard them not only with reference to their hardiness as bearing a lesser or greater degree of heat, but also as to their capabilities for growing under adverse circumstances as respects light and atmosphere.

As a general rule, no plants will grow in a room where two or three gas-burners are lit every night. They will when in full bloom beautify the place for a short time, but before many days have passed their

fading flowers and foliage will soon compel the removal of the plants altogether. Where gas is largely consumed, window gardening should not be attempted, or should at any rate be limited to that description which consists in filling the windows with plants in full flower and replacing them with fresh ones directly they become unsightly. But this system has not the interest or pleasure of window gardening proper ; it is, as it were, the outer form and symbol of window gardening, not the inward spirit.

CHAPTER VI.

BULBS AS WINDOW PLANTS.

AMONG all the subjects suitable for window decoration, there is perhaps nothing which, for beauty of blossom, fulness of fragrance, and facility of cultivation, can in any way compare to bulbs.

Of late years the list of window plants has been greatly extended, and the introduction of foliage subjects, such as Indiarubber plants, Ferns, Dracænas, Calladiums, &c., made it possible to turn sitting-rooms into miniature conservatories; but, beautiful and refreshing as these plants are at all seasons when well grown and healthy, they are doubly pleasing and interesting in spring, when the beauty of their form and the cool refreshing green of their leaves are enhanced by the introduction in their midst of a good collection of Dutch bulbs. Of late years the display of these flowers, as seen in the windows of private houses, has not, we think, been on the increase, but rather on the decline. Instead of forming a lovely spring accompaniment to the more recently introduced fine-foliaged plants, it seems as though they had become somewhat superseded by the latter. This is unfortunate, for flowering bulbs have much to recommend them to window gardeners, when they are grown in a proper manner and tastefully arranged. As amateurs, how-

ever, rarely succeed in securing both these advantages, it is possible that this may account for the diminished popularity of spring-flowering bulbs for household decoration.

Until recently it had been the fashion to grow Hyacinths, &c., almost solely in glasses; and anyone of middle age can recall the appearance of sitting-room windows ornamented with these plants, which as the flowering season approached were, as a rule, placed in a stiff, inelegant row along the middle of a guillotine window. Such a position was no doubt assigned them in the belief that the proximity to the glass would prevent the plants becoming one-sided in their efforts to reach the light; whatever might be the motive, it was a very inartistic and unsuccessful plan of growing bulbs, and, happily, is rapidly dying out. The glasses were not pretty in form, and the elevated position in which they were placed was the very worst possible to display the beauty of the blooms. Hyacinth glasses have of late years been much improved in shape, the error now made being generally in the amount of ornamentation with which some of them are overloaded. The more simple and chaste the receptacle for growing plants of all kinds, the better will be the effect; elaborate designs of foliage and flowers on plant vases and pots are incongruous and out of place, and the imitation of nature becomes ludicrous in juxtaposition to nature's self. Personally, we prefer growing bulbs in the good old-fashioned, and as yet unsuperseded, red clay flower pot, which it is very easy to mask when the bulbs are coming into flower and are needed to make a display in a jardinet.

Before entering into the practical details regarding

the cultivation of the plants, it may not be out of place to suggest how to display them to the best advantage in conservatories, sitting rooms, or where they may be required to add to the general effect, and not solely for exhibition as specimens of size or beauty of individual bloom.

The window, or windows, of a room is the position generally chosen for the display of plants, whether placed on tables, in wire stands, or in the more modern and more elegant jardinière ; for all these places bulbs, in which designation we include Hyacinths, Narcissi, dwarf Irises, Tulips, Ixias, Scillas, Snowdrops, and Crocuses—may be grown in pots and glasses. As already said, we prefer pots ; but individual taste and individual resources may be taken into consideration, and pots or glasses used by each cultivator *selon son goût*.

Where ornamental single or triple glasses are employed, the receptacle is generally considered as ornamental as the plant or plants in it, and both are freely displayed on table or window-ledge, or elsewhere. When garden pots are used, it is necessary to hide the pot and display the flowers and foliage—a matter easily accomplished, and one which, when properly done, adds not only to the beauty, but also facilitates the growth, of the plants.

Where the bulbs are grown in pots, to be flowered on a table in a window, they should be interpersed with ferns and other subjects grown for beauty of foliage. The pots should stand closely together, and the surface of the soil and interstices be filled in with common moss. The watering of the plants will keep this green and fresh for a considerable time, and should it be considered too great a trouble to remove the

plants each week for the purpose of watering them, they might be stood in a zinc or tin tray made of a size just large enough to contain the required number of pots; but we do not recommend tin as a base on which to stand flower pots. However, where no other plan is available, the tray should not be less than two inches deep, and painted a reddish brown colour, and, as the outer row of pots would stand up above this rim and have an unsightly appearance, the outer row of plants should consist of small pots of the common quick-growing Lycopodium, or even Stonecrop. We have found this latter plant flourish well indoors, remaining green and fresh a whole season—in fact, until the return of summer called for its removal out of doors with the other window plants. The Lycopodium, or Stonecrop, growing down the sides, masks the pots, and gives nature's own green as a foil to the various bright colours of the flowers.

Where *jardinières* are used it is of course only necessary to cover over the tops of the pots. The tin lining is of itself deep enough to hide the flower pot.

Among the evidences of a greatly improved taste in household furnishing, these pretty, often elegant, *jardinières* take a prominent position. Those who retain a vivid recollection of formal rows of hyacinths in glasses will also doubtless remember the bald and angular attempts at artistic design which characterised plant stands for sitting-rooms in our young days. Twisted wire or straight boards were the only materials employed, and these were invariably painted bright green—a display of bad taste, which is unfortunately generally retained at the present time; for during the past season I have observed that almost all the wire

baskets and stands so very generally employed for holding flowers were not only painted green, but the brightest and most conspicuous tint of that colour it is possible to attain.

The modern ebony and ormolu *jardinière*, whether for a single plant or half a dozen, is very simple and elegant, and displays the plants to the very best advantage. In cottage rooms, rustic tables or home-made rustic jardinetts, such as we figured and described in *The Queen* about ten years ago, are most suitable. However, whichever are employed, the surface of the soil around the plants should be covered with moss, not only for the sake of appearance—which of itself is sufficient reason—but also because by covering the soil with moss the evaporation is less rapid, and the bulbs do not require watering so frequently—a great advantage in the dry atmosphere of an ordinary sitting room.

Crocuses and Snowdrops are exceedingly useful and pretty for ornamental indoor spring gardening, but they should not be grown indoors, but taken up out of the garden, or purchased in clumps, just as they are coming into flower, when they should be potted and brought inside, where they will bloom beautifully. With regard to the cultivation, the first thing highly necessary is to procure good sound bulbs; these should be plump, hard, heavy, and smooth. The soil employed should be a rich sandy loam, composed of one-half thoroughly rotted manure and sand—silver sand is best—and the other half well-decayed turf; or good loam one-half, and cocoa-nut fibre the other, will grow the roots very well indeed. The bulbs should be so placed in the pots, rustic baskets, &c., that the crown or apex is just above the soil; the pots should then be

placed close together out of doors on a hard, level bottom, where they should be entirely surrounded and covered above with at least six inches of old tan-bark, or cinder ashes ; in this position they should not be allowed to remain longer than two months, for by this time the leaves and flower spikes will have pushed considerably forward ; the pots should now be shifted to a forcing house, greenhouse, or cool pit, according to the time it is desired to have the plants in flower. During the period of their progression, after having been lifted from their bed of earth, the bulbs should be liberally watered until the flowers begin to fade. While coming into bloom the plants should be kept as near the glass as possible, that the leaves may not be unduly developed.

When grown in water the base of the bulb should only just touch the liquid, and two or three pieces of charcoal should be put into each glass. The glasses should then be placed in a cool, dark situation for about six weeks, that is, until the glasses are pretty well filled with roots, after which they may be brought into the light to produce their flowers.

Hyacinths, *Narcissus*, &c., may be grown in glasses by substituting, in the place of water, cocoa fibre and charcoal, a preparation sent out by Messrs Barr and Sugden, of King Street, Covent Garden. The glasses should be filled with the material, when water should be added until the fibre, &c., has taken up as much moisture as it will hold. The bulb should then be placed on the top; the base of it will then rest on the fibre. A square piece of strong brown paper, having a hole in the centre to allow the shoot room to grow through, should be placed over each bulb, and

made secure to the head of the vessel, in a manner usually adopted with a jar of pickles or pot of jam. When the bulbs have rooted well into the material, the paper cover may be removed; but it is better that it should remain, as it in a great measure keeps off the dry atmosphere of the room in which the plants are growing, and so husbands the sap of the bulb, which otherwise would suffer from absorption. Another reason—the principal one, indeed—for using the paper guard is that, without it, the roots, in their efforts to get down into the fibre, would force the bulb upwards.

The second week in January—although it does not make much difference, or rather makes no difference at all, in the out-door garden, brings a host of beautiful flowers prominently before us in the florists' windows.

Many among these are exceptionally useful for window culture; while some, reared with great care in hot houses droop and wither in a few days. Among the former the Dutch bulbs take a foremost place; where provision has not been made for beautifying the sitting room by a plentiful autumn planting, a few should be purchased to make up the deficiency. In purchasing just as the flowers-buds are showing colour there is this advantage, we know what we get, and how best to arrange for effect. Buying bulbs in autumn much must be left to chance, for although they are labelled by distinctive names, each with its colour, it is not *certain* they will answer the description.

The most expensive, and novel varieties, are, as a rule, true to name, but older sorts are quite as pretty and far more economical for general cultivation. But it sometimes happens that when we imagine we have

arranged a rustic stand or border of bulbs in beautiful and orderly contrast of pink, blue, white, and yellow, we find them come up in a state we might well designate higgledy-piggledy, anyhow, in fact.

But, perhaps, worse than what some might call admired disorder is a uniformity of colour. Such a catastrophe has occurred within our own knowledge where two flower-stands, artistically planted, as it was fondly imagined, with red, white, blue, and yellow Hyacinths, displayed in their blooming nothing more than various shades of blue, from the palest *cerulean* to the deepest indigo. The bulbs flowered well, 'tis true—till all was blue, in fact—but that was not all we wanted.

As we have said, by purchasing bulbs just as they show colour such a disappointment as the above may be avoided, and Hyacinths for groups may be obtained all at the same stage of growth, another advantage over those grown at home; for, in spite of unremitting care, some of these will shoot up with more rapid growth than others, and flower while others remain backward and stunted.

With the Hyacinths a host of minor favourites appear; for however beautiful the Narcissus and Tulip, neither one nor the other can rival the Hyacinth in all her good qualities. The scent of the Narcissus is delicious, and the flower is as beautiful as the Hyacinth, but it lacks the variety of tints which distinguish the latter plant; nevertheless, it is invaluable for the length of time it remains in bloom. There are many varieties, but all partake, more or less, of the prevailing shade of yellow, from pale lemon to rich orange; they differ in the size of the head of bloom and also in the number of flowers each truss contains.

The Scilla is a very pretty dwarf flower of an exquisitely bright blue colour, exceedingly useful for window gardening.

A few pots of Snowdrops added to these bulbs, and window floral decoration of no mean order of beauty may be achieved.

In forming a spring window-garden one of the prettiest and most effective arrangements that can be made is to plant the bulbs in stands of rustic work, and in baskets of moss ; in either case fresh green moss should be laid over the surface of the soil. Only those who have seen Hyacinths, Narcissus, &c., grown in this way can fully appreciate the vast improvement it makes, not only to the appearance of the whole, but also to each individual spike, or truss of flowers.

The least pleasing form in which Hyacinths can be grown, is in the old-fashioned tall single glass; the triple form of glass is an improvement, but certainly not perfect, as the taller flowers are very apt to overbalance, and if support is supplied it gives an air of clumsiness.

Large glass or china bowls are capital receptacles for Hyacinths grown either in sand or water, if the latter plan is adopted, a very thin circular board should be placed just to fit the top of the bowl, in the board, holes, just large enough to admit the base of the bulb, should be cut, roots will soon push down into the water, and as soon as the flower-buds appear, and the bowl is brought into the light for the flowers to expand, the surface of the wood around the bulbs should be thickly covered with moss.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OUTSIDE WINDOW GARDEN.

IN arranging the outside window garden, two distinct plans offer themselves to the cultivator—the roots may be grown either singly in pots, or in boxes,

Many persons object to the first plan because of the unsightly row of pots which obtrudes itself upon the sight, to the detraction of the beauty of the plants growing in them. The latter method has the fault of making it more difficult to change the plants as they fade out of bloom; but with a little care either plan may be made to answer well, bearing in mind that where window boxes are used they should harmonize as far as possible in material, form, and colour with the house and the surroundings in which they are placed.

There appears to be a very prevalent idea among gardeners and amateurs that wherever flowers and plants are grown, rustic work may be employed with advantage; and it is a common thing to see rustic boxes and rustic stands forming a part of the gardening accessories of stuccoed town mansions. Such a style of decoration is very inappropriate, and never imparts to the beholder such a pleasing effect as where everything is in keeping.

Window plants, when it is desirable to retain them in the pots in which they are grown, may be sunk in the soil of the window-box; or, if the dwelling house be of brick, and admits of rustic decoration, a very

good plan is to form the front of a box with rustic wood, lining the wood-work with sods of fine turf, the grass side outwards. As the grass grows it must be kept neatly cut, the pots being ranged on the window-sill behind the turf; the surface of the pots and the spaces between them may be filled up with rough moss, or tan. During a very hot summer this is the best plan for growing plants, as it obviates the necessity for constant watering; the turf, moss, or tan, prevents the sun's rays darting directly against the pots and burning up the roots of the plants; the evaporation being much slower after watering, the operation has not to be so frequently performed. Where it is possible, virgin cork may be substituted for rustic work, and as there are no interstices to be filled up, there will be no necessity for lining with turf. On modern stuccoed houses the best form of window-box is that formed of encaustic tiles. We have seen flower-boxes made of looking-glass with a narrow edge of polished wood; but although they looked bright and pretty, and reflected every cloud that flitted across the sky, yet, we cannot imagine them to have been very strong or durable.

Whether plants are grown in their pots or turned out into the boxes, it is always the safest plan to cover the surface of the soil with moss or tan. We have already referred to one great advantage of this plan, another is, that, in case of heavy rains it prevents the windows being soiled by the splashing up of spots of wet earth.

During spring and summer the fields and hedgerows, the commons and woodlands, are carpeted with a variety of plants, whose foliage and blossoms are all beautiful, and almost all worthy of being transplanted and nursed

into garden flowers. As a rule only a few of our most conspicuous field flowers are known to the multitude. Even the most town-bred of urban indwellers can appreciate the delicate beauty of the Primrose, the sweetness of Woodbine, and the roseate blushing buds of the Eglantine; but then these favourite flowers have been immortalized by the poets, not only of the present but of long bygone ages; and he must be an ignoramus indeed, who does not identify the two latter with the wild honeysuckle and briar of our hedges.

But beyond these well-known and widely appreciated beauties of our hedgerows, there are blooms as sweet, as beautiful, and far more capable of being trained to less straggling habits. In the spring, the Cuckoo-flower or *Cardamine pratensis* forms a delicate window flower; and even before February cold winds and rains are over, our eyes may be gladdened with the golden blossoms of the Coltsfoot, whose large foliage is not developed until later on. While the Coltsfoot is in flower it makes a handsome plant for any window or garden, and possesses this one inestimable advantage, it is in full bloom even while the winter aconite is afraid to open its golden cup, and even the snowdrops dare not raise their modest heads.

But although these flowers are for spring alone, autumn also brings forth many pretty and appropriate flowers that, transplanted into pots, would impart interest and beauty to many a townhouse window. Those who are acquainted with the plants by their foliage may obtain them before the flowers are put forth, but those who only know them when in flower should get them at that season, or mark the bloom for the purpose of obtaining the seed when ripe. Among

the handsomest of these plants are the Cornflower, called in certain districts the Cornbottle ; the Corn-cockle, a totally distinct plant with a rich reddish purple flower, and the Corn Chrysanthemum of a rich deep yellow colour.

Added to these is the small dark purple Thistle, which has a sweet scent like fresh honey. All these little known wild flowers, with a few hardy English ferns, would make a flower garden of no mean pretensions ; and as the cultivation is the same as for any of our common garden annuals, and the cost *nil*, they would well repay the care of enthusiastic amateurs.

It is a common excuse for bare windows and unsightly forecourts that the atmosphere is too smoky and plants too expensive. Such excuses can scarcely hold good, for there are blossoms, and bright and pretty ones too, to be seen in some of the dirtiest streets in London, and plants may be found embellishing the very poorest dwellings.

In country places the growth of plants is spontaneous ; the seeds are carried about by the wind or dropped by birds, and undisturbed in their lowly and untrodden beds they germinate, and soon cover the barren earth with beauty. In towns and populous places they require regular attention ; but although they require careful tending it is not laborious work, and even where some little self denial has to be practised the work will very soon become a pleasure. “The labour we delight in physics pain.” There is no better illustration of this than in artistic work, in the category of which we may well include gardening.

The great art of out-door window gardening in towns is to choose or select suitable subjects, and treat them

according to their requirements. Where this is considered too troublesome, no attempt at gardening should be made—it will only result in disappointment.

In the vicinity of towns and the densely populated streets of London there is the same natural craving for beautiful flowers, but a much greater difficulty in obtaining and keeping them in a flourishing condition; however, during summer the humblest window of the metropolis may be rendered bright and pretty by snatching a few gems from Flora's ample crown.

With care in supplying water—an important matter, we shall enter more fully into in another part of this book—in sufficient quantity and at suitable times, window plants may be kept in beauty for many weeks. If there be any signs of flagging during the day, water should be given at once; but it should not be perfectly cold, that which has stood in the room or the sun for some time is the best. A careful gardener, however, will never find any necessity for watering at mid-day, but during very hot weather, such as we frequently have at midsummer, will give sufficient water in the evening when the sun is not on the flowers; for then, added to the moisture for the roots, the plants may receive a copious shower-bath to cleanse them from the soot and dust which accumulate, more or less, on all foliage in towns.

There are many subjects suitable for places "cabined, cribbed, confined," and streets and alleys pent, the following being among those plants we have seen flourishing in situations that would, to the non-observant, seem ill-suited. Stocks, Geraniums, Balsams, Creeping Jenny, Lobelia, *Mesembryanthemum*, Mignonette, Virginia Stock, Musk, *Myosotis Palustris*, Ground

Ivy, Virginia Creeper, Crocus, Tulip, Sunflower, Indian Corn, India-rubber and Common Ivy. These alone form a goodly list that would brighten up any place otherwise bare and barren of beauty, and cause it to smile "with verdure clad."

Window-boxes and pots in which plants are grown should be drained with a quantity of broken pot at bottom, so that water may be frequently given without any fear of its stagnating at the roots and so injuring, rather than benefiting, the plants.

Plants grown in rooms, however free from injurious exhalations and dust, require as much air as the temperature and other circumstances will allow; even during winter we have many warm, sunny days, when the window should be thrown open, and air allowed to circulate among the plants; at all times it should be regularly given. It is too often the case that window-plants get air simply by chance, and the consequence is they are sickly and ill-grown, their leaves become an unhealthy yellow, their half-formed flowers fall off, and insects innumerable appear to complete the disaster. Window-plant cultivators should remember that their often delicate charges suffer much when exposed to cold draughts, and it is to prevent this that, when the window is opened, it should be opened wide, not only a few inches, which would cause the very thing to be avoided—a draught. Again, the opportunity of giving air should be as often as possible taken when the wind is blowing *from*, rather than *towards* the window in which the plants are situated. During very hot sunshine they should be shaded, or the heat will cause drooping of heads, which on no account should happen.

Lacking a garden proper, many people are fain to

content themselves with window gardening; and although this cannot be made to rival the extensive brilliant parterre, it may be made a source of great pleasure and of daily recurring interest, if attended to with judgment and care.

Where there is a porch or balcony, area railings, or bay windows, climbing plants should always find a place. There is a great variety of these plants, many of which make a greater or less show, and flourish more or less vigorously in the impure atmosphere of large towns. Among them all, the Virginian Creeper appears to have taken, and certainly, deservedly, the first place in popular estimation. The value of this plant for covering the fronts of houses, training along balconies, and around windows is very great.

As soon as the early frosts have denuded the Virginian Creeper of its beautiful crimson leaves it may be safely removed. With the ever-increasing popularity of the American Creeper as the principal feature of town gardening, the Ivy appears to have fallen somewhat into disuse, but it has not become so scarce as many of the beautiful deciduous climbers once so popular, all of which are easy of cultivation, and will grow and flower well, as may be seen in many of the more old-fashioned squares and streets. Among them the Jasmine was at one time a great favourite, and should still find a place where there is space, the Pyrus Japonica, the Corchorus Japonica, the Wistaria, the Passion-flower, the old-fashioned, sweet-scented Clematis, and the magnificent improved Clematis, Jackmanni, with all its numerous and beautiful varieties, are available for growing on walls and training along balconies, yet how few of these indispensable aids to

ornamental gardening do we see in town or suburban gardens.

Where such plants as we have named have no more root-room than is to be found in a large tub or pot, the soil should be renewed every now and again to give the plant vigour. This may be done by manuring, or by taking out a portion of the exhausted soil and filling in with good fresh compost.

There is a widespread but erroneous notion that windows and balconies with a *north* aspect are not suitable for plants; such an aspect, during the summer, is a capital one. In such a situation plants in pots will flower for a much longer period than in a south aspect; in fact, where the latter only is available, it is a good plan to insert the pots in a box, filling up the interstices and covering the soil with moss or tan. It is also judicious to have a thick blind stretched out as an awning to shade the flowers during the hottest part of the day; if not, the roots of the plants are liable to get baked by the sun.

In considering what plants will thrive in the outer window garden, we must not forget the exigencies of situation. To treat window gardening as a whole is impossible, as difference of aspect is a factor never to be lost sight of in summing up what is or is not suitable for window growth. Also, there are windows, and windows; there is the enormous plate glass bay window, which, for plant growing, almost equals a conservatory or greenhouse, and there is the narrow high window of small panes of glass of the time of Queen Anne.

Neither of these forms are objectionable, the former admits the greatest amount of light and sun the aspect admits of, and the latter admits the light in length if

not in width ; but as window-gardening, so-called, may be extended to the balconies, areas, flagged forecourts, and yards, or any other precincts of a town house, which would be improved by the light and grace of flowers, we will understand all such to be included under the head of window gardening.

To obtain a pleasing and refreshing effect, the first and most necessary thing to be done is to have a back ground of green. However brilliant the flowers may be, half their beauty will be lost, if there should be no better foil for their bloom than the staring red brick or white stucco of a town house.

For this groundwork, so to speak, of green, two plants are conspicuously eligible ; these are the Virginian Creeper and Common Ivy already mentioned ; other plants may look as well, but are much more exacting in their requirement. The American Creeper and the Ivy will grow, more or less, anywhere and anyhow ; in congenial situations their growth is rampant. Wherever there is an unsightly house front, one or other of these plants should be grown to train up and cover it. For a north aspect or any other spot where an evergreen is more desirable than a deciduous plant, the Ivy may be chosen.

The Virginian Creeper should not be omitted where there is a western aspect, it does well, as we have said, anywhere ; but it is most beautiful where it receives the full blaze of the beams of the declining sun, under whose aspect it blushes rosy crimson, even to the very end of its leaf stem.

On a balcony, or in the square over a porch, they will also flourish ; the Creeper is preferable when the aspect is south or east, as it forms a beautiful screen to any

windows which it overhangs during summer, and, being deciduous, loses its foliage just when we require all the light and sun we can get, whatever the site. There are many beautiful subjects which are as suitable as the two above named, but their cultivation offers greater difficulties. The Magnolia is a magnificent plant, but it requires a southern aspect and plenty of root room ; its foliage is evergreen, large, glossy, and handsome, and, wherever possible, a plant should find a place on the south wall of the dwelling. The Passion-flower is very well worthy of cultivation to train up houses, around windows, and over balconies ; but it loves light and air, and should not be placed in any situation less warm than south, or south east. Of late years it has become a popular fashion to decorate the outer window-sills with plants in boxes or pots.

In many places a great deal of artistic taste is shown in the growing and arrangement of the various plants employed, but that which should always be pretty is frequently rendered unsightly by unsuitable subjects in any but suitable places. Strong contrasts appear to be the *acmé* of good taste with some people, and the artistic eye is offended by rows of funereal evergreens in staring newly *painted* red or green pots. A little study of nature in regard to her marvellous blending of colours, would convince the most ardent admirer of scarlet pots and tall, dark, mute-like evergreens, that far happier results might be attained at much less expense.

For a few months in the year, when the weather is genial and pretty uniform, the outer window-sill may be rendered ornamental by placing plants in flower on it, hiding the red pots with a row of encaustic tiles, if

for a town house ; if for a country cottage, a rustic box formed of wood and lined with newly cut turf, the grass side being placed to the front. This plan involves the extra trouble of keeping it cut close where it grows in the interstices, but the trouble is well repaid by the great benefit of the turf allowing the water to percolate slowly through, thus keeping the plants moist—a great desideratum during the scorching days of July and August.

When plants in pots are placed in these boxes, a thick layer of fresh green moss should be placed over the surface of the soil, so as to completely hide it and the rim of the pot. An economical way of rendering out-door window boxes ornamental, and involving but a minimum of expense and trouble, is planting them with Ivy, one of the close growing sorts. The small leaved, beautifully veined, deeply indented kind, which is found on the banks of so many of our old hedgerows, is very suitable, as are also many of the variegated varieties, which may be trained up and around the sides and tops of the window. In the spring, a few Snowdrops, Crocuses, Scillas, to be succeeded by Tulips and Hyacinths, and followed up with later flowering plants, will add the charm of colour and variety.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ROSE AS A WINDOW PLANT.

ALTHOUGH in France Roses in pots for window growth engage the attention of the best florists, and are sent to market by tens of thousands, in England no great effort has yet been made to popularise it as a window plant, nevertheless the Rose is a universal favourite, it is more the dread of failing in its cultivation, than any want of appreciation of the flower that causes its absence from our household gardens ; and as it deserves the place of honour, so shall the history and the cultivation of this queen of flowers, have a chapter devoted to their consideration.

Science, poetry, and legendary lore have for centuries been engaged searching out, sentimentalising and imagining the history of the Rose. It would require a bulky volume to contain all the facts known regarding the queen of flowers, while fable is always busy inventing fresh wonders regarding this beautiful plant. The rose is not the favourite of an age, but of all time, not the special growth of one little spot of earth, but dispersed over the known world. Familiar to the ancient Egyptians, mentioned in the Book of Wisdom, and sung by Anacreon in his *Odes*, the rose has held its own against all flowers since the time when written chronicles were first known.

Among the poetical origins assigned to the rose that of Anacreon is one of the best known.

“ When Cytheræa, naked to the light,
Waked from her Neptunian birth
To fill with love the circling earth,
Then—then, in strange eventful hour,
The earth produced an infant flower,
By chance, upon a blooming thorn,
Some nectar drops in ruby tide,
Its sweetly orient buds had dyed:
The gods beheld the brilliant birth,
And hail’d the Rose—the boon of earth :
They bade them bloom, the flowers divine
Of him who shed the teeming vine,
And bade them on the spangled thorn
Expose their bosoms to the morn.”

Yet, although written in prose, that concerning Rhodanthe is scarcely less poetical, for, as the legend runs, “several princes were enamoured with Rhodanthe, a beautiful Queen of Corinth. She, however, rejecting all of them, in the blind fury of disdained love they sought her life ; she took refuge in a temple of Diana. Her subjects, who defended her, dazzled by her extraordinary beauty, made her assume the place of the statue of the goddess. Apollo, enraged by this indignity to his sister, changed Rhodanthe into the first rose tree, her subjects into the thorns, and the three princes into butterflies, which still continue to flutter round their cherished love.

But it is not the Rose itself only which has engaged the attention of the poet. Roses are red as well as white, and to account for the former it is said that, originally white, the flower was stained with the blood of Venus, whose feet were lacerated by the thorns when

she was endeavouring to rescue Adonis. Spencer alludes to the incident in the following couplet :—

“ White as the native rose, before the change,
Which Venus’ blood did in her leaves impress.”

Then, too, we have to account not only for the colour but also the scent of this peerless flower,

“ Dear to earth its smiling bloom,
Dear to heaven its rich perfume.”

a perfume which, we may imagine, was left by the breath of Venus, or imparted to it by some love-lorn maid. This idea is suggested in the following lines by Ben Jonson :

“ I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honouring thee,
As giving it a hope that there,
It could not withered be.

“ But thou thereon didst only breathe,
And sent’st it back to me ;
Since when it grows and smells, I swear,
Not of itself, but thee.”

But beauty, bloom, and scent do not exhaust the list of qualifications which have raised the rose to the highest pinnacle of floral fame. Other flowers are, beyond doubt, beautiful, brilliant, and sweetly odorous ; but what other has a variety which is enveloped in a delicate nest of moss ? In this, surely, is the Rose unique ; and to what strange accident is so charming an addition to the most charming of flowers due ? Perhaps some other of Flora’s favourites, envious of the beauty of the rose, enveloped it in moss, in the hope of

hiding its charms ; but the moss, like modesty in a fair maid, only enhances the beauty it is meant to conceal.

The likening of children to rose-buds, and young girls to the opening flowers, has become so hackneyed in poetic usage that the simile is sufficient to render ridiculous otherwise good verse, but we know of only one instance where a *youth* is compared to a rose. It occurs in *Hamlet*, where Ophelia terms the Prince of Denmark :—

“The expectancy and rose of this fair state.”

But this universal flower is not alone the ideal of poets and the beloved of gods and goddesses ; it is entwined with the veritable history of nations, as exemplified in the chronicles of our country, a long epoch of national calamities and civil strife being known as the Wars of the Roses.

The Red Rose of Lancaster, which occupies so prominent a position in English history, was assumed as a badge by Count Egmond, son of Henry III., and founder of the House of Lancaster. About 1277 Guillaume Pentecote, Mayor of Provins, having been assassinated in a tumult, the King of France sent Count Egmond to avenge his death. After restoring order, the King conferred on him the title of Comte de Champagne, and he then took for his device the rose, which Thibaut, Comte de Brie and Champagne, had brought from the East, on his return from the Holy War.

Consequently, the botanists tell messieurs, the heralds, and historians that the Rose of Lancaster was a damask (dark crimson) and not a red Rose. The white Rose was most probably assumed by the Yorkists in contra-

distinction, for the Plantagenet badge was a slip of Broom.

Plantagenet. “Since you are tongue-ty’d and so loth to speak,
In dumb significance proclaim your thoughts ;
Let him that is a true-born gentleman,
And stands upon the honour of his birth,
If he suppose that I have pleaded truth
From off this Brier pluck a white Rose with me.”

Then the Lancastrians plucked each a red Rose, and Warwick truly prophesied—

“This brawl to-day
Grown to this faction, in the Temple Garden,
Shall send, between the red Rose and the white,
A thousand souls to death and deadly night ;”

a quarrel which only ended when the red Rose and the white were twined together by the intermarriage of the houses of York and Lancaster, at which time, it is said, a florist made a fortune with the happy combination of the two colours by hybridising the plants, the result being the streaked Rose, which was called the York and Lancaster, or the Union. Within the last few years these roses were still quite common in farmhouse and cottage gardens in Lancashire, though but few of the possessors of this relic of historical interest appeared to have any idea of the origin of the combined colours.

The Rose is still one of our national emblems, but other countries also hold it in high esteem. The gift of a golden Rose, consecrated by the Pope, and presented by him to a crowned head, is the greatest honour it is possible for a Roman Catholic to receive.

Such a distinction has been twice conferred, we believe, in our time. One was sent to the ex-Queen of Spain,

and one to the ex Empress of the French. Strangely enough the rose, also, was the device on the seal of the great Protestant reformer, Luther.

During summer, in all, or almost all, villages of France, a *fête*, somewhat resembling in character the old English celebration of May-day, is still popular, it is called “Crowning the *Rosière*,” and is in effect the placing of a wreath of roses upon the head of some young girl chosen, not, as we may infer from Tennyson’s poems, was the case in England, for her youth and beauty, but for her virtues. Nor is the reward merely flattering, it is substantial as well; the fair *Rosière* is the Queen of a day, who bears away, not only the temporary crown of flowers, but also a large purse; this latter, being as a rule the gift of the lord of the manor. In different districts different customs prevail, but the rule appears to be, that she who combines the greatest number of virtues shall be the recipient of the crown, awarded generally by the municipal council, and always publicly.

In one place *La Rosière* must not marry for twelve months after her coronation; in others she has to choose a husband the moment the ceremony is over. At Montrœuil the fair *Rosière*, after being crowned, makes choice of a husband; it is scarcely necessary to say she finds but little difficulty in this; she is then accompanied by her *fiancé*, and proceeds to the *Mairie*, where the civil marriage is performed, after which she is led to the church, where the religious ceremony is enacted, and the bride is presented by the Mayor with the purse, the gift of a farmer who first bestowed it in 1852.

At Enghien the purse, founded by the Marquis de la Coussaye, contains 1,329 francs. Every village is, of

course, *en fête* for the occasion, and flowers and ribbons, with all the other et ceteras of village decoration, are employed with that regard to artistic taste and profusion so characteristic of the people of France.

In the metropolis and other large cities where the atmosphere is overloaded with coal smoke, it is a matter of great difficulty to flower Roses with any approach to success out of doors, but even in London Roses in pots may be successfully flowered inside the window; and in more airy places, such as some of our fashionable watering-places and non-manufacturing inland towns, they may be grown to great perfection.

To commence with, it is better to purchase a few strong, well-rooted plants from a nurseryman in the autumn; these will require only the necessary care of providing with water and keeping from severe frost. They will, if the temperature of the sitting-room is warm and pretty even in degree, *and gas is not burnt*, flower long before Roses are out in bloom in the open garden. As a rule, a Rose tree which bears a large flower will, when in a pot, have quite enough to do to expand four or five blooms at once or in rapid succession; but if the nature of the plant is dwarf and the flowers small, such as the tiny fairy Rose, and the less common *Rose d'amour* or *Rose de meaux*, the plant may be allowed to develop almost any number of its buds.

At one time Roses were not considered to grow well in pots, but of late years this branch of horticulture has made rapid progress, and practice has proved beyond a doubt that Roses will grow in pots, and are as easily forced as any other plant we possess. After the

plants have done flowering they should be placed out of doors all summer to ripen the wood for the next season. The main features to be borne in mind in growing Roses within doors is that they require as much air as possible, so long as they are not exposed to cold cutting draughts, although they may be exposed to a rather severe frost in the depth of winter without receiving any injury. The Pompon Roses, *Rosa Lawrenceana*, are admirably adapted for pot culture, and will bloom to perfection in the spring.

Selection—that is to say, the fitness of plants for the situation in which they are to grow—is one of the first points to be considered in window gardening; and if it is important in respect to window plants in general, it is much more so to Roses as window plants, in particular. As a general rule, we might consider that all Roses which will grow in cool greenhouses will grow in sitting-rooms, and so they might if sufficient care were taken in keeping the plants clean, and guarding against too sudden changes of temperature.

Roses in pots may be purchased from twelve to twenty shillings a dozen, either for early spring or autumn flowering. If it is required to have flowers in early spring, the plants should be placed in a cool place during summer; they must not be allowed to flower, but have the buds picked off should any appear. The object is to get ripe, strong shoots ready to put forth buds in the early part of the following year. In potting Roses, great regard should be paid to the soil with which the pots are to be filled. Roses will not flourish in a state of semi-starvation, they require liberal treatment and judicious stimulation with periodical waterings of liquid manure.

The best compost is a good loam, thoroughly rotten manure from an old hot bed, and some well decomposed sheep, pigeon, goat, or fowl's dung, or where these cannot be readily obtained, turfy loam and well rotted cow dung in equal parts. Particular attention should be paid to the drainage, which must be made thorough with an inch or an inch and a half of broken flower pot in rather large pieces. When the plants are growing, they should receive weak liquid manure water once a week. Pretty little plants of monthly Roses quite deserve their name, for they have scarcely lost one batch of blossoms, before the little green buds of the next crop of flowers is peeping through. Timely attention as to placing the plant in the shade, stimulating it with weak doses of liquid manure now and again, removing fading flowers and foliage, and keeping a vigilant look out for aphides and grub, is about all that is necessary.

As conservatory and greenhouse plants, Roses have engaged more attention, yet we may consider window gardens as greenhouses of limited extent, and labouring under many disadvantages—less air, less light, less equability of temperature; yet as far as concerns plants—what is good for the greenhouse is good for the window, and Roses are no exception to the rule. Those descriptions which will flower in greenhouse or conservatory, will grow in the window, requiring only a little more care.

Generally, household horticulturists have no opportunity of propagating plants for themselves, they are happy, if resident in towns, when their plants thrive and flower after they have obtained them when well established.

The foregoing general directions may content such cultivators, but ardent amateurs living in the country usually desire to raise their own plants, which may be done by working on the Manetti or the Briar, or growing Roses on their own roots. To obtain early Roses, the plants should be thoroughly established in their flowering pots by the end of September; the compost in which they are grown should consist of four parts, clayey loam, one part well decayed manure, a little broken bones, and a small quantity of sand.

CHAPTER IX.

A GARDEN ON THE HEARTH.

THERE is, we imagine, scarcely an English man or woman who does not cling fondly to that distinctive British institution—an open fireplace. During winter, the open fire, with its glowing coals and dancing flames, is a thing of beauty, and the greatest enjoyment of the season ; but when our fickle climate has passed through its alternate arctic and equatorial phases of spring and early summer, and we have arrived at the conclusion that the days are really beginning to be longer—at such a time we generally have a spell of heat for a few weeks, which compels us to leave off fires ; the housewives begin to look anxiously round for some pretty or novel design to form a screen to the unsightliness of the empty fireplace, which, however ornate in character, always obtrudes itself upon the sight, and mars the surroundings of a prettily furnished apartment.

The days of paper aprons, formed of stripes of tissue of many ill-assorted colours, are past, but these have been replaced by designs but little less hideous, in poorer homes, while the drawn muslin and artificial flowers employed by persons of greater means, only become dirty and tawdry in a few days ; or, to prolong their purity, the register of the stove is closed, and so the air of the apartment is rendered more close and unhealthy than it might otherwise be.

In Lancashire, where intricate designs or gorgeous colouring in paper do not find favour, three or four large lumps of coal are selected, and these being made to shine as brilliantly as possible with a thick coating of black lead, a fire is laid, and masked with the pieces prepared for the purpose. In a county where to be "house proud" is to possess one of the greatest virtues, it is almost needless to say that the whole fireplace, with its attendant fender and irons, shines like silver ; but no degree of polish can take off the cold, dreary look of a grate which contains an unlit fire, and the chimney corner so eagerly sought for during winter is shunned during summer. But even during summer a comfortless, cold grate need not disfigure any apartment in the house. The old notion that flowers were unhealthy and vitiated the atmosphere of the rooms in which they were growing has been quite exploded ; we have found that plants purify the air, and, such being the case, we would advise all who can possibly accomplish it to replace the comfort-imparting fire of winter by a beauty-imparting garden on the hearth during the hot weeks of summer.

When the well-known cry, "any ornemints for yer fire sto'!" is heard in the streets, we may be pretty well sure that the flowers are blooming out in the country, and of these far more elegant and less costly decorations may be made, than any formed by the most expert fingers of the most tasteful artist. Every garden, every field, almost every common or hedgerow bears something suitable in flower or foliage ; all that is necessary is the energy to find plants, and the taste to arrange them when found. When branches of flowering shrubs cannot be had, monster bouquets may

be made of some of the commonest wild flowers, such as wild Geraniums, Ladysmocks, Buttercups, wild Hyacinths, dead Nettles, Gorse, Broom, and any of the handsome leaves which may be found from early spring until autumn in every lane and on every wayside bank. In employing wild flowers for the purpose it is absolutely necessary to bear a few primary rules in mind: the plants must be sufficiently long in the stem to bear placing in a deep receptacle, without any danger of their toppling over; they must be in sufficient quantities to make a mass of one colour, not frittered away in unmeaning dots of blue, yellow, red, and white; and the vase must contain sufficient foliage for green to predominate—it is nature's own colour, cool and refreshing to the sight and always welcome.

On the banks of fields the delicate green, deeply serrated leaves of the Cow Parsley, and the fine foliage of the Hemlock, Hogweed, and similar large leaved weeds are almost always to be had; failing these the forest trees will furnish a supply.

Those who reside near streams need scarcely lack a most charming bouquet throughout the summer, for the large, free-growing Forget-me-not, found so abundantly in moist places will not only live but unfold fresh flowers for a considerable time while in water. We have made an excellent effect with a large bunch of *Myosotis* in the centre and Creeping Jenny, and leaves from the water-side arranged to fall over the vase, so as entirely to hide the common receptacle in which the flowers were placed. The Forget-me-not will flower continuously for two or three weeks if kept supplied with sufficient water, but the flowers grow very pale by degrees, from being kept in a position where there is

not sufficient light. The wild yellow Iris of our rivers and ponds is magnificent either alone with foliage, or introduced among *Myosotis*. In towns where wild flowers cannot be obtained, and there is no garden to supply plants, a few common things, such as Wall-flowers, Stocks, &c., can generally be had for a few pence, and these with care in renewing the water to keep them fresh as long as possible, will not, at the end of the season, have amounted to a larger sum than is generally expended on an ordinary fire-grate ornament.

We would not, however, limit ourselves to cut flowers ; the garden on the hearth may be composed of growing plants, in pots. The situation is a trying one, perhaps, being far from the light, and draughty, but there are many subjects sufficiently hardy to brave these two drawbacks to plant life during the few weeks of our summer, when fires are not required, and almost unlimited scope may be found for tasteful and artistic arrangement. The Virginia Creeper, Ivy Geranium, and many other of our popular summer garden plants are suitable. To give a long list were useless, for the arrangement of the garden on the hearth must depend upon the resources and taste of the designer ; it may be formed of glowing exotics gathered from the glass palaces of the wealthy, or it may consist of a bunch of wild flowers culled from Nature's garden treasures, which may be obtained at the cost of a country ramble.

CHAPTER X.

WINDOW SILLS AND BALCONIES.

No sooner has laughing, crying April come, refreshing and gladdening the earth with sunshine and showers, than the highways and byeways of the Metropolis are perambulated by hawkers proclaiming with sonorous voice their wares to the surrounding neighbourhood. "All a-growin' an' a-blowin'"—flars, fine flars," is the welcome though monotonous cry; welcome, for it tells the world, at any rate, the world of London, that fair Flora has awakened from her winter sleep. Housekeepers, anxious to give a summer-like aspect to their windows, will purchase numbers of Geraniums, Calceolarias, and other plants even less hardy and more difficult to retain in perfection than these popular favourites. But amateur window-gardeners, like a great many other art enthusiasts, get into a certain groove and find it very difficult to strike out fresh lines of taste; it is so much easier for the greater number of people to follow an already created fashion than think for themselves; and we cannot wonder that small gardens, balconies, and other places suitable for floral display, present a great sameness of arrangement. Encaustic tile window-boxes filled with Scarlet Geraniums, Yellow Calceolarias, and blue Lobelia, are apparently considered absolutely essential in any effort at window-gardening; here and there, a relief to so much colour, is found in arches of

Ivy or Virginia Creeper, and some persons may introduce Mignonette among the showier annuals, such as Nasturtiums, &c.; but, as a rule, scarlet, blue, and yellow flowering plants are considered to offer the proper amount of variety for an effective *coup d'œil*.

Since it has become a fashion to admire flowers, and to decorate windows and balconies with growing plants, the filling of these places is, by well-to-do people, left to the hands of a neighbouring nurseryman or florist, who contracts to keep them replenished during the season for a certain sum of money. To expend any great length of time or any large amount of thought upon the planting of individual windows or balconies would not be likely to pay the contractor, therefore all these places are decorated according to rule of thumb, and there results, to say the least of it, a sameness of floral display as exhibited in the windows of the metropolis which is more remarkable for glaring effect than tasteful arrangement.

The bad taste—if so strong a term may be permitted of this style of gardening—is, or was a few years since, especially conspicuous in the miniature gardens of many houses in Paris. Such spots appeared the perfection of the “*rus in urbe*,” glowing with Roses, and rich in a display of other plants which, like the queen of flowers, luxuriate only in a perfectly pure atmosphere. The novice in matters horticultural, seeing only the effect, might mentally compare these flourishing favourites of Flora with the soot-choked denizens of London squares.

The fashionable furore for Paris as a place of permanent residence appeared to offer all the delights and interests of the country combined with the intellectual society and other manifold *agréments* of a capital city.

The old adage, that familiarity breeds contempt, was never more aptly illustrated than by a thorough acquaintance with the system of the general embellishments of Parisian gardens. The beauty and the bloom were not reared under City skies ; the buds had grown, the flowers unfolded in a more genial air ; they had been transplanted from a country home for a few days to gladden the eyes of town residents with a glimpse of fresh beauty, as some charming rustic belle might shine in society for a time by reason of her natural grace and naïve simplicity.

A short season of town life blighted the flowers, and fresh buds were not forthcoming. The aspect of faded beauty is sorrowful, but by the magic of the florist's art, it was but momentary in this instance, and a few hours saw a radical change. The Roses had disappeared, and "Hey, presto !" the garden was carpeted with Asters in full bloom. These, like the Roses, were growing in pots, which, sunk in the ground above the rim, gave the plants the appearance of having been grown there.

For those who look upon plants as so much fashionable furniture, this plan of gardening has many advantages, it entails no exercise of thought, trouble, or taste ; but it has also its disadvantages, for it is entirely devoid of interest. To thoroughly appreciate gardening we must grow the plants for ourselves ; and this is not, even in London, so difficult a matter as might be imagined. We have only to get out of the ordinary routine, and a little thought and observation will soon teach us there are numbers of plants beyond the limited list usually grown which are easy of cultivation, pretty, and suitable. Among those subjects grown in the outside window-box, or on the balcony, there should always

be a sufficient number of foliaged plants to form a relief to those which are conspicuous only for brilliancy of flowers. For this purpose the ordinary evergreens, which make annual re-appearances in the greengrocers' shops, are not particularly suitable; in fact, these dwarf specimens of free-growing shrubs seldom look well in town windows and balconies, unless it is just after heavy rains, when the foliage will, for a few days, appear bright, fresh, and glossy; at other times the leaves of these shrubs, covered with dust and soot, have a woe-begone aspect, anything but enlivening to beholders. But as there are free flowering plants suitable for town growth beyond those already mentioned, so there are numbers of evergreen plants more pleasing in appearance than the sober-looking *arbor vitæ*, &c., so commonly employed for out-door window decoration. At the present time it is a common thing to hear through the suburbs of the metropolis hawkers crying Lavender and Southernwood roots for sale. These plants are ordinarily purchased to decorate what are euphuistically called front gardens. In such situations they generally struggle through a miserable existence for a few weeks and then succumb to a July sun and a want of water. On hearing these two plants cried up and down the streets, the very sound of their names brings back the recollection of old-fashioned gardens in northern counties, where these two fragrant herbs grow into shrubs, and make the glory of many a cottage housewife; and the thought arises, why should they not grow in town windows and balconies, and lend a little variety to the almost unmitigated sameness of window-decoration generally seen?

Naturally hardy and easy of cultivation, Southern-

wood and Lavender roots can be bought for a few half-pence each, and when carefully potted and kept from the full glare of the sun until the roots have taken hold of the soil, they grow apace and form, before the end of the season, miniature and sweet smelling shrubs, which, by the exercise of a minimum of care during winter, will live on from season to season, improving each year in size and beauty ; the Lavender furnishing a bunch of the much prized flowers, which lose none of their fragrance from being produced in a town atmosphere.

For summer and autumn growth Maize in pots makes an invaluable addition to window gardens, the tropical character and fresh bright green, or variegated broad grass-like foliage, forming a pleasing contrast to the brilliant colours of Geraniums, Calceolarias, Lobelias, &c. An invaluable plant, and one which although seen, is not employed so frequently as it might be in window-boxes and pots, is the free-growing, ivy-leaved Geranium. The smooth glossy texture of the foliage of this plant renders it most suitable for growing in places where dust predominates, and it will spread and flower luxuriantly in the balconies of London streets, where scarcely any other plant can exist ; the form of growth hanging as it does in long festoons of flowers and foliage, makes it very suitable for window-boxes and the edge of balconies, from which it depends in graceful garlands.

Musk, the hardiest and commonest variety, is always useful for outdoor summer decoration, and when thoroughly established, and the soil not too much disturbed, comes up every season. Although it does not grow to a great size out of doors, it forms a pretty, odorous groundwork for larger plants.

The delicately beautiful dwarf Irises, of which we have so great a variety in spring and summer, and the magnificent Gladioli, or Sword Lilies, of autumn, are both suitable for window culture, and will flower well in such a situation. For broad balconies, where plants in tubs or large pots will stand conveniently and make a handsome floral display, beautiful shrubs might be grown, many of which would stand even a severe winter—such as the one just passed—and others which could easily be housed in some available suitable place within doors during the most inclement season of the year.

The spring, that is to say, the time when the fruit trees are in blossom, and the foliage in the parks is fresh and green, be the season late or early, is the period when it is desirable that balconies and windowsills should appear to the greatest advantage, and at such a time dwarf fruit trees in pots or tubs would make a pleasing show, and repay their cost in floral beauty, setting aside any probability of their bearing fruit. Among the most ornamental shrubs suitable for window embellishment must be classed the double flowering Pomegranate. The plant, which is seldom seen in England, is tolerably common in Paris, where it makes an annual appearance in courtyard and garden, producing its crimson blooms, in company with the Myrtle, Orange, Oleander, and other exotics.

CHAPTER XI

FORGOTTEN FAVOURITES.

As season after season arrives and brings with it something new, in the way of foliage or flowers, to impart the charm of novelty to the arrangement of our window garden, we are all of us apt to neglect old favorites that have done good service in days of yore, and concentrate our admiration, and often our hopes, upon the new friend.

It is only by recalling to memory the long list of old, almost forgotten favourite window plants that we are at all impressed with the beauty of what, if we have not quite lost, we have at any rate terribly neglected, Myrtles, Oleanders, Camellias, Cacti, Heliotropes, Orange and Lemon trees, Aloes, scented Geraniums, lemon scented Verbenas. All these plants were familiar friends in the window gardens of our younger days, many other subjects there also were which are still popular at the present, but these are mentioned because, save in very old fashioned households, they are conspicuous by their absence, yet on the whole there are few if any plants of a similiar nature to equal them. We say this quite advisedly, remembering at the same time the rich colouring and delicious perfume of the Hyacinths, the gorgeous tints of the Tulips, the tender grace and elegance of Palms, Spiræas, Deutzias, the variety, beauty and delicate green of young Ferns; still remembering all

these, seeing their worth, appreciating their immense value as imparting ever fresh interest and delight to a window garden, we still say we have lost much by forgetting old favorites.

The Camellia is in itself a very queen of window plants, only curtseying to the Rose; nor when its requirements are once thoroughly understood, will any great difficulty be experienced in its cultivation. We have known a large plant of scarlet Camellia to be flowered most successfully year after year in the same sitting room, taking its siesta, or season of rest, in an ordinary empty room at the top of the house. A plant which bloomed profusely once a year in the drawing-room, and then retired to an attic until the next season's flower buds were forming, can scarcely be looked upon as being particularly exacting. We have said that the plant after flowering was placed away in an unused room, but it also had some weeks in the open garden, from about the beginning of July until the end of September, but taken in earlier if the weather was cold and wet.

To have Camellias in absolute perfection, a temperature somewhat higher than that of a cool greenhouse is required, nevertheless the plant may be beautifully bloomed in an ordinary sitting room window, as we have already said, the routine of its cultivation being as follows :

If the plant is small, it should as soon as it has done flowering, be re-potted, into a pot one size larger than that from which it has been taken ; if a large, good old plant it should not be re-potted oftener than once in two or even three years, provided sufficient fresh soil is given to prevent exhaustion, or suitable fertilizers applied.

The best soil in which to grow the Camellia is a compost of equal parts of peat and loam; but as it is not always possible to obtain peat, the next best thing is light sandy loam, enriched by the addition of a little leaf mould. After potting, the plant must be placed in the window of a warm room, one in which a fire is kept; in this it should remain for some time, but as the season advances it may be removed to an empty room, where it will get plenty of air and light. This is the time when the plant makes new growth, and forms flower buds, water should therefore be somewhat liberally supplied; the leaves and branches should also be frequently sprinkled with water, and all dust carefully washed off the foliage with a wet sponge.

Air and light are essential to the life of this plant, but in no case should it be exposed to the full glare of the sun, nor to a strong current of air. At the end of June or beginning of July a sheltered spot in the garden, where the rays of the early morning sun alone will reach it, should be found for the Camellia. The pot must not be stood on the ground; the best plan is to place it on three or four bricks, but a thick layer of coal ashes will serve if the former cannot be obtained. Should the weather prove very dry, which is often the case at this season, the Camellias, although out of doors, must be regularly watered.

About the end of September, the Camellia should be returned to the house, at first into a room without a fire, or into the greenhouse or conservatory. As this is the critical time, when the buds sometimes drop in an apparently unaccountable manner, redoubled care is required in regulating the waterings most exactly in relation to the requirements of the plant. The soil

must never be allowed to dry up for an hour, nor must water stagnate in the soil, soddening the earth, and destroying all chance of bloom. Plenty of water must be given at one time, but none allowed to remain in the saucer ; thorough drainage ensured by a good depth of sherds in the pot will allow the water to run through with sufficient rapidity to prevent all danger of too much wet.

While the flower buds are swelling, weak tepid liquid manure may be given once a week, and should there be any danger of blight, the foliage should be washed with a sponge and tepid water and soft soap, using clear tepid water, after cleansing with the soap and water.

The little trouble involved in these operations may well be taken, to ensure a full display of bloom, which, once done, the cultivator will be well rewarded for all his care.

The Oleander, scarcely less handsome than the Camellia, has of late years fallen into greater neglect than the latter, yet the window cultivation is rewarded with more certain results than in the case of Camellias. Dwarf, or rather short, plants of Oleander combine all the points most desirable in household plants.

A thorough knowledge of the habitat of a plant, and of the conditions under which it thrives in a state of nature would be the surest means to ensure successful cultivation of exotics ; common sense might then be brought to bear upon the subject, and our practice be guided by such knowledge.

The Oleander is a case in point. To know the nature of the country in which it is indigenous, and the peculiarity of soil and climate in which it thrives, is to know how to treat it here.

The Oleander is a native of the East, and is found growing luxuriantly on the banks of the river Jordan in the sacred land of Palestine. This offers a key to its cultivation, for it flowers at the rising of the water, at another time it bears the extreme heat and parched up soil of an eastern summer.

There are many varieties of the *Nerium Oleander*, those most in request being the double varieties white and pink. These were most likely imported from the East Indies some time about 1683.

The cultivation of the Oleander is extremely simple ; it may be easily raised from cuttings or layers in the following manner :

Any time during September and October prepare a quantity of two or three jointed cuttings, by removing the lowest leaves and making the heel of each, immediately under the joint, perfectly smooth.

Place an inch layer of broken potsherds as drainage at the bottom of a pot six inches broad ; upon this drainage place a coating of moss, then a compost soil consisting of one part of reduced turfey loam, and three or four parts of heath mould, press this mixture firmly into the pot, water it, and make as many holes in it close around the side of the pot as there are cuttings. Into each hole pour half an inch of silver sand ; set a cutting upon the sand in the hole so deep, that it may be at least midway between point and joint ; then fill the holes with sand, and cover the entire surface of the soil with half an inch layer of it. Saturate the whole with water, and see that the cuttings be quite fixed, and immovable without some effort ; upon this close contact of plant and soil depends much of the future success. The pot of cuttings must be kept in a temperature of

from 50 to 55 degrees during winter, and many plants will then be found perfectly rooted in the spring.

Among the cuttings taken from a full-headed strong plant, many will have the heads of future bloom formed among the upper leaves ; these will make young blooming plants, coming into flower in April and May.

The Oleander will grow in any pure soil, light loam, rich turf loam, loam with leaf mould, or black heath soil. When in flower it affects, as we already know, much water ; but few plants can better bear a season of drought, nature has in fact prepared it to bear extremes of wet and arid heat. Constitutionally the Oleander is almost hardy, but young plants will not bloom freely unless assisted by heat, especially during spring, but as our sitting rooms at this season, and even well on into summer, are seldom without fires, the heat is generally great enough for the requirements of the Oleander.

We have already referred to the neglect which appears to have fallen upon the Oleander. This may in some measure be accounted for by the fact that the common Oleander is highly poisonous. In the natural system of botany it is placed in the order Apocynaceæa, the Dogbane family, of which it is said in the *Hortus Britannicus* they are generally acrid, stimulating, and astringent, these principles, when in excess, act so powerfully on the nerves as to produce stupefaction. In Balfour's "Manual of Botany" it is stated that persons have died from eating the flowers of this plant; the branches divested of the bark being used as skewers on which meat was roasted, seven persons out of twelve partaking of it died.

The entire plant of Oleander is said to abound with

deleterious juices, and should be treated with caution ; but we do not think this need deter any one from cultivating so beautiful a plant. The odour of the sweet scented varieties is not unlike that of the Tonquin bean ; this fragrance is due to an essential oil resembling that of bitter almonds and of peach and laurel leaves. The foliage of Oleander is strong and leathery in texture, beautifully veined ; therefore, should it not bear a mass of bloom in the window, it is well worthy a place in the collection on account of its rich dark evergreen leaves.

Large plants of Oleander can only be grown in a greenhouse, or conservatory. We have had splendid specimens five to six feet high, in square tubs, such as are common on the Continent, and they flowered every season, some with clusters of pure white, and some with rose pink flowers. As we have said, young plants may be flowered in April and May, and larger ones will come into bloom throughout the summer up to August.

From the end of September until March, Oleanders should receive only sufficient water to keep the soil from becoming crumbly. During the rest of the year the pot must stand in a saucer, pan, or tub, according to its size, immersed to nearly half its depth in water. A strong rich turfey loam is the best soil for established plants.

Although we have dilated somewhat fully upon the poisonous nature of the Oleander, we hope no amateur will be deterred from its cultivation on this account. It has been said that in a *very close atmosphere* the perfume of the *Nerium Oleander* has been known to cause numbness, with pains in the head. Almost any highly aromatic flowers would do the same under the

same circumstances ; some persons cannot remain in a room where large bunches of Hawthorn are shedding their perfume around, others cannot endure the strong scent of the Syringa, and even our ordinary Musk is distasteful to some persons ; therefore if by cultivating Oleanders, or any other fragrant and beautiful flowers, we are taught to keep our sitting-rooms at an equable temperature, with a free circulation of air, we shall gain not only in the increased beauty imparted to our apartments by our floral treasures, but also in health.

Lemon and Orange trees, Myrtles and Olives, all make excellent window plants. The routine of care-taking is the same for all, although there is some slight difference in the time of flowering. All these shrubs were much more popular a few years since, and no greenhouse collection was considered complete without one or more fine plants of each description. They recommend themselves in every way to the attention of the window gardener ; they are easily kept in health ; the foliage of three is evergreen, of a rich deep colour ; the blossoms of all are fragrant and beautiful, and all are easily propagated, should the amateur prefer to raise his own plants by layers, cuttings, suckers, and seed. The Lemon and Orange trees may be grown from pips, and it adds to the interest felt in the growth of the plants when we have thus reared them from the embryo. Half-a-dozen seeds from a well-ripened orange, and the same number from a lemon are a sufficient number to experimentalize upon. A couple of pots with a good depth of sherds must be filled up to within an inch of the rim with good rich loamy soil, and six pips sown in each ; plump seeds that feel heavy for their size are best. They must be sown

about an inch deep ; if the soil is moist they will not require water at the time of sowing. A piece of glass may be placed over the top of the pot, or an inverted tumbler ; this condenses the moisture, and facilitates germination. The soil must never be allowed to dry up into dust, nor must water be kept in the saucer. As soon as the plants have grown three or four inches, they may be transplanted each into a pot. For decorative purposes these plants may be allowed to grow and flower. Grafting is not necessary unless fine fruit is required.

The easiest way to obtain good plants, for a window, is to purchase small specimens, just coming into bloom. Any number of miniature Orange and Lemon trees, in miniature square boxes painted green, were to be purchased in Paris a few years since, they were in fact one of the commonest ornaments of the window garden. Many years ago we brought two, an Orange and a Lemon, to England, and kept them for a long time ; they flowered beautifully each season.

We have heard that it is often possible to obtain fine young plants of Orange, Lemon and Olive trees from merchants in the city, who import fruit from Italy and Spain. If this be so, those who have the opportunity may well avail themselves of it, but Myrtles of a suitable size and ready to come into bloom may generally be purchased at the nurseries.

Perfect cleanliness is one of the best aids to the successful flowering of these shrubs, as it is to that of the Camellia and Oleander ; but, unlike the latter, the Myrtle, the Orange, the Lemon, and the Olive revel in the warmth and rays of the sun, and will not flower in situations uncheered by its beams.

Dust must never be allowed to lie on the foliage, washing with a sponge dipped in tepid water, leaf by leaf, must be frequently resorted to, and syringing with tepid water through a fine rose. Should there be any sign of *scale* on the bark, or leaves, it must be carefully washed off with soft soap and water.

If the plants are in pots sufficiently large for their roots, they need not be shifted; the soiled can be renewed by taking out as much as possible, without injuring or disturbing the roots, and filling up with fresh rich soil of a loamy nature.

In the northern departments of France, where Orange trees are very generally employed for summer gardening, the tubs or square boxes in which they are grown are furnished with wheels, so that they may be more easily removed from winter to summer quarters, and *vice versâ*. The boxes are also provided with hinges to every side, to facilitate the renewing of the soil; one side is opened and looked at every year, and the roots are pruned or fresh mould introduced, as the cultivator thinks fit.

Pomegranates and Myrtles are also cultivated in square boxes in a similar manner to Orange trees, the Myrtle being as much admired for the exquisite fragrance of the foliage as for the delicate beauty of the flowers. They bear small dark purple oval berries, where the climate is sufficiently mild to allow of their ripening their seed. The leaves and flowers of the common Myrtle have been used medicinally. From the flowers and young tops distilled water has been made, which was employed as a cosmetic and also as a gargle. A decoction of the flowers and leaves was at one time considered excellent for fomentations. The chemical

oil obtained from the berries is employed to strengthen the hair ; they are believed to be powerfully astringent, as is shown by the following anecdote, culled from the *Dictionnaire portatif de l'Histoire Naturelle*, published previous to the year 1802.

Myrtle is likewise the base of a pommade called *Pommade de la Comtesse*, and well known on account of an extraordinary historical fact. One of those gay youths who flutter about the toilets of the fair happened one day to be left alone in the storehouse of the graces. With eager curiosity he examined the perfumes, the smelling bottles, the perfumed powder, the essences and the cosmetics. To give more of the vermillion and greater pliancy to his lips, and to remove some disagreeable eruptions, he lightly spreads with his indiscreet finger the fatal pommade, looks at himself in the mirror, and contemplates his beauty with admiration. The lady enters: he wishes to speak, but his lips contract and he can only stammer. The lady looks at him with astonishment; at length casting her eyes on the toilet table she discovers, by the open pot, the cause of the mistake, and enjoys a hearty laugh at the expense of her admirer, whose confusion announces his indiscretion.

But we will not part with the Myrtle, under such an aspect, we would rather think of it in the character given to it, in the charming verses by Felicia Hemans.

“ In eastern lands, they talk in flowers,
And tell in a garland, their loves and cares,
Each blossom that blooms in their garden bowers,
On its leaves a mystic semblance bears.

“The Rose is a sign of joy and love,
Young blushing love in its earliest dawn,
And the mildness that suits the gentle dove,
From the Myrtle’s snowy flowers is drawn.”

The lemon-scented Verbena, although perfectly hardy in the southern counties of England, is generally cultivated as a greenhouse shrub; it is, however, a capital window plant also, only requiring plenty of drainage, a good rich soil, judicious watering and perfect cleanliness of foliage. The botanical name is *Aloysia Citriodora*; it is easily propagated by cuttings.

The lemon-scented Geranium is invaluable as a window plant, as it will grow all the year through in a warm sitting room, and forms in Spring a fine mass of foliage, as a background to the brilliant spring flowers.

CHAPTER XII.

ON SUCCULENTS.

AMONG the old favourites of the window garden and the greenhouse there is a class of plants now greatly neglected, but which, properly treated, repay as well as, perhaps better than, any others, the care of cultivation.

We allude to the *Mesembryanthemums* and *Cacti*, known, collectively, by the name of succulent plants.

At one time miniature specimens of these eccentric subjects were, and indeed still are, very popular on miniature flower-stands in Covent Garden market. We fear, however, that although many are sold, few survive the purchase for any length of time; the manner in which they have been grown is forced and unnatural, and when they pass from the hands of skilled technical cultivators, and become the property of amateurs absolutely ignorant of all their requirements, the plants are done to death in a short space of time by either too much or little attention.

Nevertheless, among them are many which will grow in a window as well as anywhere else. Their form is peculiar and varied, often distorted, and they may be trained to suit the exigencies of a window light without disfigurement, a trial which many other plants cannot stand.

In the dwarfed form in which they are sold they are not of much value, even as horticultural ornaments; but they will repay purchase and care both, when turned out, and grown in ordinary sized flower pots, like other plants.

Among them all the best known, most easily cultivated, and most popular is the common scarlet Cactus.

At one time this plant was to be seen in almost every cottage window, wherever there was any attempt whatever at floral decoration; but like many other old and worthy favourites, it appears to have gone out of fashion, not from any intrinsic fault of its own, nor because of any superior merits of its successors, but simply as an example of the inevitable law of mutability.

Perhaps the liberal offer of Mr. Peacock, of Sudbury House, Hammersmith, will give an impetus to the growth of these plants, and again bring them to a foremost position in the window garden.

Mr. Peacock's highly interesting and vast collection has long been known among horticulturists and amateurs, and his most generous gift to the Botanic Gardens, Kew, and Alexandra Park, &c., of an immense number of magnificent specimens, must tend to make these beautiful plants more known, and, therefore, more widely appreciated.

But that nothing may be wanting to place his favourites in the first rank, Mr. Peacock sometime ago signified his intention of giving clergymen, secretaries of horticultural societies, and other persons interested in the welfare of the poor, any number of plants and cuttings of those succulent subjects most

suitable for window culture. Under these circumstances Cacti and Mesembryanthemums must again become common—but none the less beautiful because common—objects of window gardening.

The ordinary scarlet Cactus is without doubt the most showy and conspicuous ; there is also a much less common but most beautiful variety of this plant, bearing white flowers, which should, where possible, have a place beside the scarlet one ; there is also a smaller pink variety, which is invaluable, being much neater of growth, and flowering most profusely—a very picture of delicate pendant pink blossoms.

The Cactus Senilis, or Old Man Cactus, is a curious, if not very pretty variety, and well worthy a position among a collection of these plants.

The specimen at Kew no doubt is well known to all visitors to the Cactus house in the gardens, but the towering height to which that giant has attained has taken many years of growth, and similar kinds of plants in pots for house culture are most suitable when about a foot high.

The plant is certainly not elegant of form, but peculiar and interesting from its grotesqueness, and has gained its name from the long white fibres that grow at the top and hang over like the scant silvery locks of some venerable octogenarian.

The cultivation of Cacti is extremely simple. They strike readily from cuttings, and, as may be easily understood, flower much sooner when so propagated than when grown from seed. As soon as the season of bloom is past, cuttings may be taken ; these should be planted in the following manner. At the bottom of the pot put an inch of broken potsherds, then fill up with a

compost of soil consisting of one part reduced turfy loam, and three parts of heath mould, with an addition of small brick rubbish. Persons residing in towns can always obtain this mixture from the nearest florist for a few pence, according to the quantity required. The soil should be firmly pressed into the pot, and if the soil be not sufficiently moist it should be watered. As many holes as there are to be cuttings, without crowding, should be made round the pot, and some silver sand—about half an inch—placed at the bottom of each. The cuttings, which must be *perfectly dry* at the cut part, should then be placed in the sand, the hole filled in with it, and the surface of the pot covered with sand. It is to be observed that the soil and the cuttings must be in close contact, or they will not strike so well; they should, in fact, be so firm in the pot that it would require a slight effort to pull them out.

If there is any convenience for keeping these pots under a glass, where they can always be in a warmer and damper atmosphere than the air of a sitting-room, it is better, but they may be well struck without this, care being taken that they do not suffer from drought, more especially during their season of growth. During the winter but little or no water should be given.

Although differing widely in size and appearance, the Sedums, Mesembryanthemums, and Echeverias all flourish under the treatment given to Cacti; and the former, though less imposing in form and size of blossom, are on the whole more useful plants to the ordinary window gardener.

Among the Sedums suitable for pot culture, *Sedum Fabarium* is the largest and most showy; it bears

handsome bunches of pink flowers, and is indifferent as to growing in sun or shade ; its foliage, which has a whitish tint, is useful as lending variety to the general mass of green. *Sedum Glaucum*, as its name implies, has foliage of a seagreen tint, of the same character as our common Stonecrops. It is of free flowering habit, and the ease with which it may be propagated recommends it for cultivation in the house ; requiring very little depth of soil, it may be grown in shallow pans, or large red clay saucers, and is useful where an extremely dwarf plant is required. The common Stonecrops to be found on old walls are quite as handsome, and answer exactly the same purpose. The common yellow, which forms a very carpet of gold, is well known, but there are two other varieties, the pink and white, which are equally, perhaps more, beautiful if not so showy.

The first time we ever saw these two latter varieties was many years ago, on a holiday excursion to the Isle of Man. Every one who has journeyed in the Lake districts of Westmoreland and Cumberland will remember the loose stones piled one on another, which form the dividing walls on hillside pastures ; such walls are the common fences on Monas' Isle, and they are, or were, literally covered with a wealth of Stonecrops, white, pink, and yellow. So accommodating are these Sedums in their nature, that a number of plants taken from the walls grew and thrived in a garden close in the outskirts of Liverpool, a town scarcely remarkable for purity of atmosphere. Echeverias, Sempervivums, or Houseleek, by whichever name we may call them, are but members of the same family as the Stonecrops. Like all the tribe of succulents, they are particularly

easy of propagation, and many are very hardy. *Echeveria Secunda*, E. S. *Glauca* are both plants that should have a place in the window, the former on account of its pretty graceful flowers, borne on a slender lateral stem, with parti-coloured blooms red and yellow; the latter for its glaucous foliage. The common indigenous Houseleek is also handsome, and should not be discarded because it is homely. There is a strange superstition current in some parts of the country to the effect that ill luck will attend the inmates of any dwelling where the *Sempervivum Tectorum*, or common Houseleek, takes root, grows, and flowers.

The list of these plants might be enlarged to an overwhelming length, for there are fourteen genera and 400 species; and although we only regard them from an ornamental point of view, many are exceedingly useful, as for instance, *Sempervivum glutinosum*, with the fresh leaves of which the fishermen of Madeira rub their nets, thus rendering them, after they have been steeped in some alkaline liquor, as durable as if they had been tanned.

Among the Mesembryaceæ, the Fig-marigold and Ice plant family, *Mesembryanthemum Tricolor*, and *M. Crystallinum* should find a place in every house garden. The former bears handsome flowers, almost rose colour, fading to white; the latter is the well known Ice plant, so often seen with a collection of miniature Cacti.

A plant turned out of one of the tiny pots, to be met with in Covent Garden Market, into an ordinary flower pot, with plenty of drainage and good sandy, loamy soil, will in the course of the summer make a beautiful window plant, growing rapidly, and putting forth an abundance of small bright lilac flowers.

Many of the Mesembryanthemums are called *meteoric*, by reason of their closing their flowers during cloudy weather. Linnæus placed *Mesembryanthemum Nodiflorum* in his floral clock, but some are put to greater use than this, for *M. Edule* is eaten as the Hottentot fig, and *Tetragonia expansa*, as New Zealand spinach.

Agaves, or Aloes, are, when of a suitable size, excellent plants for a room. *Agave Americana*, *A.A. Verigata* and *A. Gilbeyi* may be easily grown in a sitting room, the only care required being to keep them clean, give plenty of water in warm weather, when the plants are growing, and very little during winter.

The variegated plants, which have white or yellowish white bands of colour down the sides are exceedingly handsome, among groups of dark green leaves. All three plants make numerous offsets, which take root readily in new quarters, and thus those who cultivate these Aloes generally not only have a sufficient number of plants for themselves, but many to give away to their friends.

CHAPTER XIII.

A PARLOUR PARTERRE.

OF all the four seasons of the year, spring is the time when window gardening receives the greatest amount of attention. The renewed activity of what we are pleased to term inanimate Nature begins to express itself in swelling leaf-buds and delicate fresh blossoms, and the advent of the few first outdoor flowers of the year is greeted with a merry chorus of chirrup and twitterings, yea, even full-throated songs, from the little birds who have hybernated with us, or have lately returned from other climes to enjoy our coming summer and enliven our precarious spring. But while, in the open air, and exposed to all the vicissitudes of weather so changeable in its temperature that the only thing certain about it is its uncertainty, only two or three of the first pale blossoms of the unripened year dare to emerge from their secure covering of brown earth, within doors we may be enjoying a very floral paradise.

There are few, we imagine, in this age of artistic proclivities who would willingly deny the charm and unmistakable air of refinement that strikes the senses on entering a room where growing plants and cut flowers diffuse beauty and sweet perfumes.

During winter and spring all would like to have window gardens "*ça va sans dire*," no doubt, but, to borrow another French phrase, "Le jeu ne vant pas la chandelle" is generally the first thought of the economically minded, or those whose purse strings can only be loosened at the demands of necessity, not taste.

Floral decorations, like a great many other fashions of the present day, have come to be looked upon as a pleasant way of displaying wealth ; and in the elaborate window conservatories, expensively furnished glass-houses, and elegant drawing-room *jardinières*, we see, not the outcome of the love of flowers and the artistic ideal of the mistress's mind, but so many guineas annually paid to a master of floriculture to keep everything *comme il faut* in this respect.

Gardening, like every other art, generally increases in expense, in inverse ratio to the natural taste for it. An enthusiastic naturalist would delight as much in the study of the nature and habits of native insects as in those of a white elephant, and at much less expense. In horticulture we may consider rare and costly exotics the white elephants ; which, although greatly to be admired, it is impossible for the bulk of the nation to possess, and so content ourselves with more easily obtained, more readily reared, and, therefore, much less expensive pets of the parterre.

In summer, when flowering plants—Geraniums, Lobelias, Fuchsias, &c.—may be had for a few pence, most of us make an attempt at a floral display more or less gorgeous. But to experience the true delights of the amateur, to sip from the cup which intoxicates the passionate zealot, we must grow plants for ourselves, we must with our hand bury the seed which holds the invisible germ of future strength and beauty, observe the development of leaves, the swelling of the embryo blossom, wait with watchful anxiety its expanding, then indeed we can enjoy, nay, revel in its inimitable beauty ; we feel with it, and for it, and become enthusiasts, and by degrees experts, in the art of cultivating Flora's favourites.



FIG. 8.

As an instructive item in the possibilities of window gardening, we will give the history of our parlour parterre. The rudiments, if we may be allowed the expression, were obtained some years ago, when a limited purchase of flowering plants was made for a balcony ; the aspect being north, the plants grew apace day by day, even during the protracted drought and heat of the season, and flowered in profusion, when other plants exposed in windows to the full glare of the sun withered and died prematurely. These plants, as we have already stated, formed the nucleus of our window garden, they consisted of red, white, and lemon-scented Geraniums, which helped to form the necessary amount of foliage to throw out into relief the flowering bulbs which were then in the zenith of their glory.

With those dwellers in town and suburbs not possessing a glass house, the vexed question at the end of the autumn generally is, what shall be done with the plants? To leave them to die, after the pleasure experienced from their daily contemplation, is a thought, which, cannot be entertained for one moment. To consign them to the limbo of an attic or empty room is not desirable, for once there, they may possibly be forgotten, until frost, or an overwhelming accumulation of dust renders them so sickly that it requires weeks of careful nursing to get them into presentable condition in the spring ; under such circumstances the best plan is to form a parlour parterre by keeping the plants in the sitting room. Such a one we have had ourselves, and it was a most successful winter and spring garden.

As soon as signs of severe weather appeared the plants were brought in : and although not taken from

the balcony until the beginning of November, they put forth a few more bright blossoms to enliven the declining year. Among our limited collection was a pot of common Stonecrop, which flourished exceedingly, and, elevated on a small Chinese vase, grew into a positive cushion of beautiful fresh green, almost covering the sides of the pot.

Among the conspicuous beauties may be noted a really splendid white and lemon-coloured Narcissus ; it was what the Devonshire folk would call a "proper beauty;" straight and strong in the stem, with a coronal of eight fully expanded blooms, and as many more in various stages of emergence from the bright green spathe.

Another Narcissus was orange-coloured, and creamy white. This was the first of the bulbs to burst into bloom, about a month before the others. Another, but less conspicuous Narcissus, a mean between the two tall ones, had petals of the palest primrose with deep lemon-coloured centre.

Then there were six fine Hyacinths, the first of these to expand being a beautiful rose-pink, which, having been in flower nearly as long as the first Narcissus, was just at that stage when the bloom of youth was fading, and the less striking charms of middle age appearing. It had lost its *beauté du diable*, but still was a fine presentable flower, though its younger and more fragrant sisters began to outshine it. Among them was a truly magnificent deep blue, densely compact, and which was called the twin, as it had grown up with two stems joined in one, bearing a double number of bells ; the sobriquet of double-headed, with which it was at one time threatened, was not, however, applicable, as at

the apex of the flower-spike the blooms were so close together, and so thickly set, there was scarcely room for them to expand.

Two other Hyacinths were, a very pale double blue, or what might be called lavender, and a pure white; the remaining two were yellow. Added to these were three pots of double dwarf tulips.

The Geraniums, &c., were arranged on either side of the flowering bulbs, and imparted the natural softening effect of plenty of green foliage as a contrast to the brilliant blossoms. All that we have mentioned might, of course, have been realized in a few hours by the expenditure of a pound or two at the florist's; but under such circumstances window gardening is but a pretty show. The point upon which we would insist is, that the flowers above mentioned were obtained at a cost of a few shillings in money, but at the expenditure of a little time and much enjoyable care.

The room in which these floral pets were grown was used as an ordinary sitting-room, which had an open fire in it almost every day from autumn until the following April.

Dust being one of the greatest enemies to vegetable life, and as it will accumulate, even in the best regulated apartments, a systematic plan of removing all the plants into the scullery during each weekly "turn out" of the room was adopted. When below stairs the pots were stood for an hour or so in a bath of tepid water, that is to say, water which was not so cold as when drawn from the tap, but did not feel warm to the hand. While in the bath the plants received a thorough washing by being rained ove —so to speak, from the fine rose of a watering can. When the water had

entirely soaked the ball of soil, the pots were taken out of the bath and allowed to drain, and when all dripping had ceased, they were returned to the sitting-room until “tub day” came round again.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON GENERAL CARE.

IN growing plants in rooms and windows, one of the first things necessary for future success is to have the plants properly potted; those purchased from the florists are as a rule well attended to in this respect, but the true amateur will not be content with these only, he will require to grow things for himself, to strike cuttings, alter and re-arrange his stock, and perform all the work necessary to keep his flowers in health, strength, and vigorous growth.

Where plants have been wintered in the house they will require careful attention during the month of March. When the weather is sufficiently fine, the plants should be taken from their winter quarters; if any dust has accumulated on the foliage, it should be carefully brushed off, and all dead or decaying leaves taken away.

The plants sufficiently hardy to bear the exposure, may be placed on the outer window-sill, but they must not be put out while there is an east wind blowing, nor left out all night, as cutting winds and night frosts will destroy plants in a few hours. The very best time to put the plants out for the first time in the season is when a warm gentle rain is falling. During the month of March preparations should be made for spring potting;

the plants to be shifted should be watered thoroughly two days previous to the day the operation is to be performed, so that the soil may be in a moist state, neither wet nor dry; the fresh compost should be in the same condition.

If new pots are to be used, let them be soaked in water an hour or two before the plants are put into them; if the pots are old ones, they should be well washed, scrubbed, in fact, both inside and out. The drainage should be perfect, and every plant should have a pot provided for it suitable to its size. Over the hole in the centre of the base of the pot, a large piece of potsherd, or small oyster shell, should be placed, then smaller pieces of potsherd, or small clean bits of broken brick, to the depth of at least an inch.

The plant that is to be re-potted should be taken upside down in the left hand, the stem of the plant between the middle fingers, the edge of the pot gently tapped against the table edge, when the pot may be lifted up as easily as the extinguisher from a candle.

The ball of earth around the plant must be examined. If full of healthy roots, the plant may be placed in a pot one size larger than that from which it has been taken; the sides must be filled up with fresh soil, the drainage materials as already directed, having been placed in it. The ball of earth in the new pot should be covered to the depth of half an inch with fresh soil, leaving a depth, always, of half an inch at least below to run of the pot for watering.

In the matter of soil, situation, and potting, plants require a great diversity of treatment; yet although these points are very essential in propagation, they are not vital in respect to plants purchased during their season

of bloom—the cultivation, or rather, we should say, the after treatment, lies in a nutshell.

They must receive water and air in plenty, but the supplies must be regulated according to the season and the nature of the plant. No plant should stand in saucers full of water, unless, indeed, it be musk, or the Indiarubber, in the height of summer, and then the absorption of moisture by leaves and stems and roots is so rapid that all the water is sucked up before it has had time to stagnate. With other subjects the plan is never to give water until the soil is dry, then give ample, sufficient to saturate every particle of soil, root and fibre. When the water has percolated through into the saucer, the latter should be at once emptied and replaced.

Whenever the weather is possibly fine—that is to say, neither torrents of rain, nor frost, nor cutting winds, the plants should be placed out in the air, taking them in, as we have before said, in the—or towards—evening. Light, warm showers at any time are beneficial to any plants.

In cultivating plants in sitting rooms, there is great diversity of result. Here and there we find plants grown in windows thriving, flourishing, and forming the greatest ornament of the place, while in other windows no less favourably situated, we see exactly opposite results.

Each cultivator has a plan of his or her own, but the great difference, which results in success or failure, is that one person's care and attention is systematic and regular, the other, fitful and haphazard.

Whatever flowers may be selected for indoor growing, care should be exercised in discovering that they are suited to the situation in which they are to be placed. This must

be more particularly borne in mind in referring to those subjects which are to remain permanently in the house. Temporary occupants of the window garden may be of almost any description ; they being merely put there for a short season of bloom, are taken away as soon as that is over, and being placed out of doors in summer, or in the greenhouse if in winter, more favourable positions for development, they soon recover the vigour they have lost in the vitiated atmosphere of a close room.

It is in selecting plants which are to become perpetual ornaments of the window that the greatest care is necessary.

CHAPTER X V.

POPULAR PLANTS.

TOWARDS the end of February, the present long and varied display of popular plants begins to find a place in the florists' windows ; it is in fact an annual feast of flowers, when every one is struck with admiration at so much floral loveliness, and almost every one desires to make some of it their own. With ample means, this is of course a very simple matter ; in a few hours a bare room may be transformed by the aid of the florist into a very bower of beauty, but when this is accomplished the cost is not the only thing to be taken into account. Those who truly love and appreciate plants cannot help asking themselves : How long will it last ?

There are many reasons why it should be only a temporary glow of colour. The aim of the grower has been to make his wares as attractive as possible, therefore they have been, as a rule, brought to the zenith of their beauty, the full flush of their flowering, before being sold ; secondly, they have been taken from houses kept at a temperature exactly suited to their requirements, each class of plants being treated according to its nature ; thirdly, from the congenial atmosphere of the hothouse or carefully guarded greenhouse they have been taken to market, thence they are trans-

ferred to a drawing-room, where their requirements are never considered ; their wants are made subservient to a dozen different things, the appearance of the room, the arrangement of the furniture, the æsthetic tastes of the mistress, whose last thought would be to make her ideas of artistic or picturesque effect give place to the exigencies of plant life. Add to this the fact that half the purchasers (we speak well within bounds) know nothing whatever of the nature of the plants they buy, and can we be astonished that out of the thousands of beautiful plants sold in towns, few ever survive the summer season !

Now spring is the very time when many plants, distinguished by graceful form and glowing colours, come into bloom. These are instant favourites. Who can see the first flowering plant of *Dielytra Spectabilis* without wishing to place one in the window ? Who can observe unmoved the first fresh flowers of a clump of forced Lilies of the Valley, or not desire to become possessed of the finest and most delicate Azaleas, a dwarf Rhododendron, glowing with colour, a plant of elegant Palm, or the fairy-like fronds of a fine maiden hair Fern ?

All these and a host of others are popular plants, because they come early in the year ; they are fresh, they are beautiful, and they are bought by thousands, it seldom entering into the thought of the purchaser as to whether they are suited to window growth, or rather we should say without thought as to whether the window is a good place for them.

Among one of the most popular of all is the Cineraria ; perhaps it is the daisy-like form of the blossom that makes this plant so general a favourite. We have

heard it called sweet, a “darling flower,” and every endearing name that could possibly be bestowed, but alas, its beauty and the pleasure of its possessor have been both shortlived. Cinerarias are *not* good window plants. As a rule they become infested with green fly, and their beauty lasts but a few days at the utmost.

Azaleas and tender Rhododendrons are also very favourite plants, but has any one ever seen either *grow* in a sitting-room window? They may, if purchased in bud, under favourable circumstances, finish out their season of bloom, but even so much as this is seldom the case. As a rule the half expanded buds drop off, and the plant itself begins to fade in a very short time.

If Azaleas and Rhododendrons die quickly, hothouse Ferns and Palms, Mimosas, and a host of other delicately-reared, often unnaturally-forced subjects die much quicker; but it must be fully understood we do not wish to deter any one from purchasing these lovely if evanescent children of the florist’s art, all we desire to do is to warn them against building any expectations upon their growing and flourishing in a sitting-room.

As floral decorations they are charming, as a means of giving direct and remunerative encouragement to the skilful labours of the gardener they are useful. We have heard of one lady who sends her footman down to Covent Garden Market, every Saturday, with a five pound note, wherewith to purchase floral treasures. He returns in a cab, laden with spoils, and having much the appearance, we should imagine, of an aristocratic jack-in-the-green. This is all well, of course, as a fashionable means of displaying wealth, but it has nothing whatever to do with a love of gardening. The lavish use of flowers in this way is but the outward

expression of that innate love of the beautiful common to all mankind. Those who admire flowers but would not raise a finger to call them into life, or prolong their existence for a day, is no nearer approach to being a horticulturist than the man who can admire a fine picture is to being an artist.

The enthusiast, the amateur (accepting the word in its true meaning, as one who loves his occupation), whatever the paucity or prodigality of his resources, whether his care be expended on raising a plant from seed, or growing a rare collection of Orchids, he is the gardener ; it is he who feels the enjoyment of life, for he has "always something going forward," as Gray expresses it. He it is who has always something to hope for, a promise to be realised ; and as we all know "promise is the very air o' the tune," it is the roseate flush which overspreads the sky at eve, making the present beautiful with the pleasant omen of a flood of sunshine on the morrow.

CHAPTER XVI.

USE AND ABUSE OF WILD FLOWERS.

THERE are differences in window as in all other forms of gardening ; and situation, aspect, and means, have as great an effect, and display as marked a difference in the result, in the limited space afforded by the window, as in the extensive grounds around the mansion.

While window gardening becomes each year more widely spread, the more marked becomes the distance between the window gardens of the rich and of the poor. To supply the wants of the former continents are explored, and greenhouses and hothouses ransacked, to find the most appropriate and hardiest plants, while the latter have but a minimum supply to depend upon ; for want of light, want of air, and want of means, restrict their ideas and their operations to the cultivation of a few well known, easily obtained, and very hardy subjects.

However, there is for every evil an attendant good. And if a window garden is obtained at a great expenditure of time, trouble, and anxiety, it is likely to be, in the end, a source of far greater satisfaction than the elaborate arrangement of exotic plants which grace some Belgravian mansions, and which are replenished, at considerable cost, as often as the flowers fade, which happens very frequently during the summer months.

Between these two extremes are many window gardens more or less tasteful, more or less expensive ; but it is possible to have and maintain a pretty and interesting window without any expense whatever.

In our lanes and woods and fields are a number of plants, many of which will grow and flower well even in smoky London. Foremost among these is the primrose. The coy, half opened blossoms of the primrose and violet are truly sweet and doubly dear, as they are the first link in that chain which binds a floral garland round the year.

The poetical allusions to the beauties of the seasons are especially numerous, the older poets perhaps excelling the modern ones in the praises of spring ; but this is scarcely to be wondered at, for the older writers drew their inspiration from nature, which was close at hand, while the present generation, if dwellers in a city, have to seek nature out in a few remote haunts, where she is allowed a little of the *abandon* and free play which is one of her greatest charms.

A few strong plants of Primroses snatched from copse or meadow bank in early spring, or better still in autumn, with a good ball of the tenacious soil in which they love to grow, and placed in pots with plenty of drainage, will flower season after season, provided they have plenty of water given them, and are shaded during the hottest part of the day after February has passed.

Violets are more chary of the change from their native habitat, but two or three pots of the wild scented purple, and beautiful wild white Violet, which is perhaps sweeter than the first, might be tried ; but in digging them up, care must be taken not to injure the roots, and as much soil as possible should be lifted with them,

enough in fact to fill the pot in which they are to be placed, unless similar suitable compost can be purchased—but the best plan is to bring some from where the plants are found growing.

All the common hardy Ferns make graceful window plants, and grow and flourish with a minimum of trouble. What we have said in respect to Violets is as necessary in regard to Ferns; soil that is natural to their growth, plenty of drainage, pots or pans of suitable size and ferns, if kept clean, and regularly watered, will flourish exceedingly well, producing even seed.

With all window plants, it is a good plan to cover the surface of the soil in the pots with moss, it is far prettier to look upon than the bare soil, and is also the means of keeping it moist for a longer time. To prove its good effect, it is only necessary to place two plants, say primroses, as they flag quickest when water is wanting, side by side, let one have the soil covered neatly and closely over with moss, the other left bare, and it will be found that the plant which has the soil covered with moss will produce much finer flowers, continue much longer in bloom, and require less water than the one without.

There can be little doubt but that one of the greatest ornaments of the window garden is a collection of hardy Ferns. These plants are suitable either for indoor or outdoor cultivation. As the groundwork of a house garden, nothing is so useful nor so easy of growth, and those who wish to receive satisfaction from their gardening labours should be careful to obtain a good collection of hardy Ferns for outdoor windows, as well as more delicate varieties for indoor cultivation. These latter require a little more care in their manage-

ment, but it is quite worthily bestowed, for they impart elegance, grace, and beauty that cannot possibly be obtained by any arrangement of flowering plants alone. When so many people leave town during September, and seek the country for a holiday of a longer or shorter period, those who have any knowledge of plants, combined with a habit of observation, will find no difficulty in obtaining a collection of Ferns, Sedums, and Saxifrages perfectly hardy, and suitable for growing in window gardens.

In many of our favourite picturesque summer resorts, numbers of hardy Ferns are to be found for the seeking, and it cannot but add interest to the work of gardening, when the plants which we tend remind us of happy holiday hours and pleasant country rambles.

In September all our common ferns are in perfection, and a visit to their habitats, and a practical acquaintance with their form, size, and peculiarities, will give the amateur a better insight into their fitness for the window than pages of verbal description, or strings of botanical names hard to understand, and harder still to remember.

Among the numerous varieties to be found in the woods, on old walls, and near shady watercourses, some suitable for windows are sure to be found, while large plants of the ordinary bracken of our commons may well be treasured for placing in pots or rustic boxes on balcony or window-sill.

A good collection of ferns in a rustic stand of virgin cork and moss is in itself sufficient ornament in any window, but as some might think such a garden too cold and tame, we would suggest such a rustic stand being *made*, and as each season brings round some bright

particular flower, a few of these may be introduced among the ferns. The early Snowdrops will come up before the young green fronds of the ferns have appeared, but they will be ready to welcome the Primroses, and these darlings of the spring cannot have a more fitting setting than the graceful feathery fronds of the ferns which so often grow in the immediate vicinity of the pretty pale primrose.

As the season from early spring advances, the desire to possess a pretty window garden becomes more and more ardent, and no matter what the situation may be, it becomes quite possible to gain the desired and desirable end by studying the aspect of the place and the nature of the plants to be grown in it. North, south, east, and west, no matter what the point of the compass, something may be found that will flourish. The direct rays of the sun, hour after hour, may injure one flower, while it imparts colour and strength to another. Thus ferns, which delight in moisture and shade, will grow in that cold window where geraniums and similar subjects refuse to bloom. As a bit of gorgeous colouring culled from the meadows in April and May, nothing will be found to excel Caltha Palustris, or Marsh Marigold.

This is a far too little known indigenous beauty, that makes any water meadow lying open to the sun's eye a veritable field of cloth of gold; one far more gorgeous, we would wager, than that on which Harry the Eighth met his French rival; such a meadow there was, a few years since, near the town of Reading. It lay between the Kennett and Avon Canal, and a stream which went by the name of the "Holy Brook." To reach the meadow the latter had to be crossed by a wooden bridge, looking

up or down stream. The rivulet was quite darkened by the willows which were growing on each side, and almost crossed their branches over the peaceful waters that flowed beneath so gently, that, as they glided along in the deep still shadow of the branches overhead, they seemed to bear a fancied resemblance to that religious life which, passed in the shadow of obscurity, still is not barren of good works, but makes its influence for good felt far beyond the narrow limits in which it is itself confined. No sooner had we passed from beneath the shadow of willows than we came across a very blaze of splendour; the footpath ran through a meadow, which, in very early spring, was literally carpeted with Caltha—the “May-buddes” of our ancestors, the May-balls of the Lancashire peasants; nor is the plant remarkable only for the golden gleam of its petals. These rise from out large fleshy green leaves, having much of the character of the leaves of the Water-lily, and are in themselves quite worthy of cultivation. Plants potted up for the sitting room must stand in saucers of water; we have had them grow freely throughout the blooming season, and even seed in such a position. *Myosotis Palustris*, growing in the same localities, and quite as striking in masses from the clear inimitable blue of its petals, makes a splendid contrast to the Caltha.

Where there is no means of *growing* Caltha and *Myosotis*, it is possible still to enjoy their beauty for a prolonged period by having them as cut flowers. By renewing the water every two or three days buds will develop the same as though in soil, and the flowers will seed. We have had them in a window in a group of ferns, &c., in this way for more than a month, and if they lose in interest from being merely cut flowers

they gain in appearance, as we can group them as thickly and richly as we please, by having them placed closely together encircled by their own or other appropriate foliage.

Among other wildlings suitable for window growth, either indoors or out, we must not omit to mention the ever popular Moneywort, the Creeping Jenny of the plant hawker, the *Lysimachia nummularia* of plant catalogues. To name this is sufficient, as every one knows, and almost every one grows it.

We have said every one knows the Creeping Jenny, but even those who do know, may not thoroughly appreciate it, if they are only acquainted with it in the stunted specimens seen growing in London. It is a plant that will live and flower almost anywhere and under all sorts of ill treatment, therefore few are aware how luxuriant it becomes when treated with a little bit of that care which is so ungrudgingly bestowed on exotic plants, which do not repay the cultivator with half the beauty of the homely Moneywort. It likes rich loamy soil, it likes moisture, it also likes plenty of sunshine, in its season, and it likes a position where it can allow its long bloom-covered branches to hang down to any length it pleases. Planted in hanging baskets or rustic stands, suspended in balconies or areas, it is splendid, and for such positions we have nothing that can compare to it in brilliance of flower; the well known Canary Creeper is too delicate for such exposed situations, and the beautiful ivy-leaved Geranium, which is mentioned elsewhere, is not so brilliant nor so hardy.

Equally useful as trailing plants are the indigenous ground Ivy and the pretty Pedlar's Basket. They both

bear smaller flowers than the Moneywort, both have pretty, if miniature blossoms, and the foliage of both is extremely beautiful.

The leaves of the ground Ivy are roundish, much indented, and slightly hairy. In autumn they often change from green to all shades of reddish bronze, the flowers are of the most vivid blue, the growth in good soil is quite as luxuriant as that of the Creeping Jenny, and the plant sends out long trailing branches in an exactly similar manner.

The foliage of the Pedlar's Basket is of the same form as that of the ground Ivy, but bright and glossy. It is found on old walls, and similar places. It is not so luxuriant as the two former, but quite deserves a place in every window, either in a pot or in a hanging basket. It flowers profusely with delicate blossoms of a pale lilac tint.

With the exception of the Common Bracken of our heaths and commons, all our native ferns may be cultivated in the house ; and those who have the opportunity should certainly obtain a few plants, even should it be only those collected during an autumn holiday.

We have said sufficient to prove that even our hedge-rows and fields may provide us with no mean amount of beauty for our window. Hosts of other flowers there are, among which some might bear transplanting into such close quarters, but the greater number, beautiful as they are in their native habitats, growing with the free grace of uncultured nature, would in a sitting-room look indeed like weeds, which is, as we have lately seen defined, merely a plant, however beautiful, out of place, where it is not wanted, and where *something* that is wanted would grow ; no, we will

name no more wildlings for fear they should come within this definition, or what is still more likely they should refuse to live, which it has been said is always the case with the beautiful Wood Anemone. We have had young plants taken up in the spring flower well in a room ; these were afterwards planted out in the open garden. It is a beautiful plant both in flower and foliage, and would make a desirable addition to the list of spring flowers, if it could be kept healthy from season to season. It is at least worthy of a trial.

But while we would encourage the growth of our most suitable wildlings by all the means in our power, we would at the same time protest against the wholesale destruction of the wild plants which goes on each succeeding season.

As soon as the spring sun shines, Primroses and Violets deck with their sweet beauty every copse and hedgerow that is left in the open country ; but from many of their old habitats the ferns have almost disappeared, and many of the most beautiful species are almost lost ; we hope, indeed may say believe, this can never be the case with the commoner but sweeter wild flowers of our woods, fields, and hedgerows. It would certainly need even a more determined raid than is now made by the young possessors of nimble fingers every season to eradicate the primrose from its favourite home.

We can but feel thankful that these, one of the commonest and most beautiful of the wildlings of nature, are scattered so profusely over the land that they are not likely to follow the fate of the ferns.

CHAPTER XVII.

ATTACHED CONSERVATORIES.

ALTHOUGH unheated, often indifferently built, many times at the rear of the dwelling, often with a north aspect ; still, under any or all of these disadvantages, the little square glass house that is now so often set a-peak the porch, at the front, or covering in a long line the balcony at the rear of a residence, is better than a mere window for plants. Had it no other advantage, the mere fact of the light coming from above, instead of altogether from the side, is in its favour. Once the light is favourable so much can be done, so many things can be grown, that would in a window be rendered ungraceful and unnatural from a distorted form of growth.

Even a glass house, it may be thought, would have been useless during such a winter as we have just passed, for without fire heat frost would enter and destroy everything in a night. Fortunately, however, frost may often be kept out without fires by hanging thick canvas, old baize, or any other easily obtained and handy covering between the glass and the plants. Such a protection can always be at hand, and by having strong hooks in the woodwork of the house, and strong rings in the squares of canvas, or whatever else is used, it might be put up and taken down in a few minutes. Even such slight protection as this saved many plants during the past winter.

All those plants which will do well in a window, will, if frost is kept out, do much better in a conservatory; so many beautiful flowering shrubs only just require to be saved from having their roots frozen, or their foliage nipped throughout the coldest times of the year, that it were a pity a little trouble should not be taken to ensure their health, they will repay it tenfold with their beautiful blossoms in due season; and only those who have tried can know how very much handsomer are the flowers, how much sweeter the perfume of plants that we have reared, than any that money can purchase from the most skilful of florists.

All such subjects as we have already enumerated for the window are suitable for the conservatory, more especially the hard wooded descriptions, as Oranges, Myrtles, Camellias, &c.; but, added to the long list useful in the window, there are others which from their size or climbing habit are most suitable in a glass structure, even though that be small.

Plumbago Capensis, and *Bignonia Radicans* may be included in the latter, as well as the numerous splendid varieties of the *Clematis* and one or two of the *Passion flowers*, with the ever favorite *Jasmines*, especially *Jasminum Grandiflorum*.

We would also suggest a trial of a plant or two of double flowered *Pomegranate*. This plant, common enough in France, is somewhat difficult to obtain; but the single variety is almost as beautiful. *Hydrangeas*, also, which soon outgrow the limits of a window, are exceedingly handsome in a conservatory; and where all danger of frost is over for the season, many beautiful strong growing annuals and biennials may be reared in the miniature greenhouse.

Such conservatories, where they only receive the sun's light for a very short time, either from being placed with a north aspect or being overshadowed by surrounding buildings, can be made exceedingly pretty with groups of Ferns, a collection of Sedums, Aloes, Cacti, hardy Palms, &c.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON INDIVIDUAL TREATMENT.

As in a family there are certain general laws in respect to air, temperature, cleanliness and food to be observed, and which are applicable to the household as a whole, so there are certain small distinctions to be made in regard to the treatment of persons individually. It is the same with our plants. As a whole they require warmth, moisture, air and food, but the quantities of these necessaries of existence vary with the nature of the plant, and must be regulated by the requirements of each plant.

Aquatic and semi-aquatic plants may, during their season of growth, stand in water. Succulents will bear long seasons of drought unharmed. Plants, such as the Oleander, which come from the borders of rivers in the East, will require flooding with moisture at one time, while at another season the soil may be parched up by a powerful sun without injury.

It is the same in respect to air as to water. A sudden change may be endured without any apparent ill effects by some hardy plants, while Camellias and other similar sensitive subjects drop their buds, droop their foliage, and suffer for weeks.

Roses and sun flowers, especially the latter, are grateful for a large amount of plant food, administered in the form of liquid or other manure; but the large doses which add to their robustness of constitution, facilitate their

blooming, and increase the size, richness of colour, and general beauty of the flowers, would kill many other subjects. The warmth, also, which is necessary to one is inimical to another. As soon as the March sun becomes bright and powerful, the snowdrops leave us rapidly, while the primrose courts its blaze in the open air. But place the primrose inside the room, where it gets both sunshine and fire heat, and it droops in an hour, while the rose and many other plants will only condescend to disclose their flowers in such congenial circumstances. We are compelled to be thus precise because we would impress upon the tyro in horticulture that thoughtful care of plants is sure to meet with a due reward. There are certain broad bases on which the treatment of the whole home garden may be founded, but there are nevertheless individual idiosyncrasies in vegetable nature that must be regarded, and much of the certainty of success depends upon the attention we pay to the apparently trifling differences in the nature of the plants we cultivate.

CHAPTER XIX.

ON AREA GARDENS.

AT the present time when gardens proper are becoming more and more restricted in extent, and each house is being limited to an air space of a few feet square, either at the back or front, no apology is necessary for introducing the subject of area gardens into a book of Household Horticulture. It is, or should be a considerable, ever growing more considerable, branch of town horticulture, and in this respect is worthy of all the attention that can be devoted to it.

The French, who have much more of an artistic taste diffused among them, and who are more ingenious than we are in finding a means of developing that taste, will beautify a place no matter how unlikely the spot, how unpromising the surroundings. To our more utilitarian ideas and less idealised tastes, the French conception of what is suitable and pretty often appears a caricature; this is, or rather was, nowhere more conspicuous than in the gardens of Central Paris, as doubtless will be remembered by many who rambled through the streets of that city some twenty-five years ago.

It was nothing unusual in those days to come upon parts of old Paris, where the houses were irregularly built, and where one out of many had a square plot of ground at the back, often surrounded on every side by

the many-storeyed dwellings common to the city, which plot of ground was called a garden, and certainly was the object of as much attention and as much enthusiastic admiration as though it had been a rural paradise.

To give a *vrai-semblance* of distance to such confined spots the dead walls were, where possible, hung with canvas, on which were painted trees, alleys, fountains, and many other of the *entourages* of a country mansion. Two such specimens of outdoor scenic effect remain ineffaceably impressed upon our memory, one opposite the side windows of a mansion in the ancient and aristocratic quarter of the Faubourg St Germain, the other in that narrowest and busiest part of Paris, the Rue du Temple.

The gardens on canvas were but a ridiculous continuation of a good idea—that of rendering the surroundings of home as pleasant and attractive as possible.

It was the apparent, nay, glaring artificiality of the effect which spoilt the design. It was the theatre in daylight, where the sylvan groves and hanging gardens of tropical splendour, unaided by the glamour of gas-light, appeared tawdry, meaningless, and squalid when contrasted with one living plant, however insignificant, or one glimpse of real sky, however grey.

The square of ground, the Parisian town gardens—by these we do not mean the ample spaces surrounding the mansions of the Champs Elysées, but the limited areas at the backs of street houses which we in England should treat as back-yards—were laid out and planted as miniature pleasure grounds; liliputian borders contained as many plants as could be crammed

into them, and diminutive paths gave access to the beds.

In some a large tree afforded shade from the sun's rays, in hot weather, and a miniature fountain threw up a thread-like jet of water at stated intervals ; where space permitted, a small—*very* small summer house was erected, and beneath the generally clear sky of even the most crowded localities of Paris the happy proprietors of such gardens would take their meals *al fresco*, undeterred by the thought that they were overlooked by numerous neighbours. The borders were never bare of suitable plants. The nearest *marché aux fleurs* supplied at little cost a constant succession of flowers in pots, which, being sunk into the ground, were removable at pleasure, and were never allowed to remain for one day after the beauty of their bloom was past.

Thus the tiny garden was always fresh and gay, and it was possible to leave it one evening full of the summer denizens of the parterre and rise the following morning to find it occupied by a brilliant display of autumn asters.

The most permanent occupants in such gardens were the plants in tubs, which placed under cover during winter were again brought out each spring, and certainly gave a charm to the otherwise rather artificial aspect of the whole ; these plants in tubs consisted of Orange trees, Myrtles, Oleanders and double flowering Pomegranate.

A little of the adornment of back premises and otherwise unsightly spots so common in France might surely be attempted with success in England ; it is certain there is a fast spreading love for flowers being diffused among the people here, and nothing could better tend

to a true appreciation of the value of plants in towns than a practical illustration of their worth for masking unsightly brick walls, covering mounds of rubbish with verdure, and giving the interest of life and beauty to otherwise dreary paved courts and dingy backyards.

It is of course impossible to grow plants in the often unsuitable soil, and beneath the soot thickened atmosphere of large towns, with the same facility as in the congenial surroundings of the open country ; but here and there we find startling evidence of what has been done ; and it is certain, with a better knowledge of the requirements of vegetation and truer discrimination in the selection of subjects, much more might be accomplished.

The rearing of young and tender subjects in densely populated districts should never be attempted ; the vitiated air of cities, which has no apparent effect upon the matured constitution of adult men and women, chokes up the tender breathing organs of the young, causing sickly, stunted growth, and even death.

So it is with plants. Healthy, well-established, robust specimens will live and thrive in London with a little care, while young and tender subjects will linger only through a living death for a few weeks, perhaps months, and succumb prematurely ; therefore it is advisable that all attempting town gardening should, as far as possible, copy our continental neighbours in having as many good-sized specimens of suitable evergreens, &c., as practicable, in tubs or pots..

Such plants as the Orange, the Oleander, the Myrtle and the Pomegranate, will require shelter during winter. But this is seldom a matter of great difficulty, as there is generally an outhouse or other convenient place about

the dwelling where frost cannot penetrate, in which such things can be wintered during the severe months of the year ; then we have a long list of hardy evergreen and deciduous shrubs, which can be left out-of-doors all the year round.

During spring, summer, and autumn, interest and variety might be added to the arrangement by the introduction of annuals and other flowering plants grown in pots. These can be arranged in many different ways to hide the pots.

Any plants requiring shade and moisture will do well in an area. The Common Bracken of our woods and commons, planted in tubs or boxes, makes a splendid plant; Creeping Jenny in pots, boxes, or baskets, will grow rapidly, and, hanging down, make a verdant and flowery show for the best part of the year. There are also other wildlings quite as beautiful and quite as free growing, if not so showy as the Creeping Jenny ; the ground Ivy for example, with its handsome foliage of all tints from green to deep bronze, and its intensely blue blossoms which renders many a country hedge-row bank so beautiful during summer. A few plants taken up and potted would be found very useful and suitable for cultivating in an area garden. Also the Germaner Speedwell is excellent for the purpose, although the individual flowers last but a short time, to which may be added the pretty little simple Pedlar's Basket, which may be found in a wild state on almost all old walls, in company with different mosses. The flowers of the Pedlar's Basket are somewhat inconspicuous, but the foliage is very beautiful, and the trailing habit of growth of the plant makes it exceedingly useful for hanging baskets, windows, &c. Stone-

crop is a very good subject for the area garden, and if at the time of planting it in a pot—which is best done in Autumn—a few Crocus bulbs are introduced three inches below the surface, these in the spring will come through the green cushion of Stonecrop and be highly ornamental in their emerald setting.

However, as all areas are not alike, either as regards size or aspect, it were as well to consider this very important factor before completing any plans for planting.

Should the aspect be a sunny one, shrubs in large pots or tubs should certainly have a place in it, if there is any convenience for keeping them indoors in winter; they may consist of some of our most beautiful half hardy flowering shrubs, such as already named for the window and conservatory, where they must remain in their quarters all winter. Hardy evergreens should be selected, many of which are bright and beautiful. The common Laurel, the cheerful *Ancuba Japonica*, the Sweet Bay, the Euonymous, plain and variegated, the Berberis, and last, if not least, the invaluable *Laurestinus*. Such are a few named at random from memory; many others there are, but those mentioned are the most suitable for town culture, because their smooth and glossy foliage is brilliantly beautiful after every shower of rain or every thorough washing easily given through a hose or syringe.

Trailing plants and other things in pots and boxes will do well in such a situation. We have seen two such area gardens in the west end of London, that during summer were excellent instances of how much may be done even in unpromising situations. Ivy Geraniums, Scarlet, White, and Pink Geraniums,

Lobelia, Nasturtium tall and dwarf, Tropeolum Canariense, almost everthing, in fact, which will grow in cities was there, and a very charming picture they presented—a very oasis of floral beauty in a desert of bricks and mortar.

Thus, even in our climate, less sunny than that of France, it would surely be possible to introduce some modification of the present barren austerity of our areas and back yards, and yet not quite emulate the *outré* pretentious town gardening of Paris, with its painted perspectives, which are only ridiculous, and its *multum in parvo* embellishments, which are simply childish.

CHAPTER XX.

LILIES AND PALMS.

THERE is something so suggestive of beauty and freshness in the very names of Lilies and Palms, that all who have the slightest taste for horticulture generally desire to possess as many as possible of these lovely plants, nor do they appear to be cultivated for the sake of their delicate beauty, nor their stately elegance only, sentiment has doubtless much to do with their universal appreciation. Perhaps the first serious thought that enters the young mind is aroused by the words of the admonition, "Consider the lilies how they grow, they toil not neither do they spin ; yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these"—and in England at least we fancy the lowly Lily of the Vale is the one which first suggests itself to the childish imagination, which cannot but be struck by the apparent strangeness of the comparison. Modesty and humility are more the attributes of the unobtrusively sweet Lily of the Valley, but wider experience teaches us that the comparison was as true as it was beautiful ; for the lilies of the East are indeed magnificent, clothed in gorgeous colours, more diversely and richly beautiful in their texture than anything the brain of man could design, or the hand of man execute.



FIG. 4.

From the East, too, come those magnificent Palms, many of which we are making almost our own, inuring them to our less sunny land and colder clime by slow degrees.

The imagination, or memory rather, adds also to our admiration of these graceful children of the vegetable kingdom; for they are pictured by pencil and pen in all

stories of Eastern life, and the tall stately palms are the never failing beacons that point out where water is to be found, when crossing the sterile desert.

In naming Lilies, or rather we should say Lily-like plants, for window cultivation, we speak of them as Lilies, because they present themselves to amateurs as belonging to that class. Any attempt to enter into minute botanical distinctions would, we fear, result in inextricable confusion: therefore we shall include in this chapter those particular flowers which those uninitiated in the mysteries of botany call Lilies.

Among the best known are the *Vallota Purpurea*, or *Scarborough Lily*, and the *Bella Donna*, or *Guernsey Lily*. The former is indeed one of the showiest and most easily cultivated of all our window plants. Being evergreen, the bulb should not be taken out of the pot even after flowering, but the plant may be placed in a cooler, and less sunny situation for the season of rest during winter; but although comparatively quiescent, the plant must not be forgotten, but will require an adequate supply of water throughout the year.

As the summer advances, the pots of *Vallota* should have the soil top-dressed with fresh compost, and slightly manured. About the middle of July the plants may be allowed to go dry for a short time, until the flower heads are seen coming up. When these appear, watering may be again commenced, and sufficient supplies continued while the plant perfects its flower. Weak liquid manure may be occasionally substituted for clear water.

Nerine Sarniensis, the *Guernsey Lily*, often called "The *Bella Donna*," although there is another Lily, *Amaryllis Bella Donna*, imported from the Cape, cannot

be said to be cultivated here at all, as the bulbs are imported when in bud. All we have to do is to provide suitable spots in which they may expand and display their blooms to the greatest advantage. The bulbs should be planted in good light loam as soon as possible after purchasing. They are imported during the months of August and September. As the Guernsey Lily is leafless at the time of flowering, it should be so placed in the window that the *entourage* of foliage supplied by ferns, etc., shall serve as a foil to the brilliant beauty of the rose-coloured petals of the flower.

Although not so commonly seen in windows as the two former, *Lilium Speciosum*, more commonly known as *L. Lancifolium*, is quite as easily grown, and though not so showy as the *Vallota*, is quite as beautiful, and more interesting, in that there are many varieties; the height (five feet) of some rendering them unsuitable for windows, those best adapted for pot culture are *Lilium Speciosum Album*, *L. S. Punctatum*, *L. S. Roseum*, and *L. S. Rubrum*.

Lilium Thunbergianum, although not generally grown in sitting rooms, is well worthy a place in any window sufficiently large to admit of its being grown with good effect. The colours are very showy, ranging through many tints of orange, red and yellow. It bears its flowers in clusters of five to seven. It blooms in the open garden in June, anticipating this date by a few days when reared under glass. *Lilium Tenuifolium* is a pretty delicate plant, bearing bright scarlet flowers on very slender stems. The cultivation of this latter is rendered doubly interesting from the fact, that it may be reared from seed, and flowers the second year after sowing. Many of the Cape bulbs are excellent for pot

culture. *Ixias* and *Tritoneas* are quite hardy. If the bulbs are kept in a dry place during winter, the season of flower is from May to the end of June, for *Ixias*. *Tritonia Aurea* blooms in the autumn, *Tritonia Squalida* in early summer.

Triteleia Uniflora and *Tigridia Pavonia* are pretty dwarf species from America. Like all other lilies they are very easily cultivated, and like almost all others, require to be kept very dry during winter.

But we must not dismiss this class of plants without alluding to the Irises, the dwarfer varieties of which are excellent household plants, such as *Iris Pumila*, *Iris Pavonia*, and *Iris Persica*, as well as the very popular *Iris foetidissima*; this latter is known to almost every one, as it is sold in great numbers in Covent Garden, not for its flowers which are insignificant, but for its bright red seeds, these are often used for Christmas decorations, the three first named Irises are charming plants, and beautiful additions to the flowers of any window garden as are also two very favourite old window plants that appear, unfortunately for us, to be falling somewhat out of favour. These are the Lily of the Nile and the African Lily.

These are the names known in past years to the amateur gardener, but they go by many others now; the first is called *Calla*, or *Richardia*, *Arum Ethiopicum*, and *Trumpet Lily*. To our mind none of these are so applicable nor so suggestive as the old fashioned title, Lily of the Nile. It suggests the habitat of the plant, and, as we have already said of the Oleander, thereby suggests much of the manner in which it should be treated. Every one who ever gives a thought to flowers at all is sure to know and appreciate its superb beauty

of flower and leaf, those who have never seen it, could never realise its magnificence from any verbal picture of its beauty ; suffice it to say that as it is one of, if not the most beautiful of window plants, so is it one of the, if not the most easily cultivated of the whole. It may stand in a saucer of water during summer, requires moisture throughout the year, regulated in quantity according to dryness of soil or coldness of the season.

The African Lily, *Agapanthus Umbellatus*, is not so striking as the former, nevertheless it is a splendid pot plant, invaluable for the beautiful blue colour of its large clustered head of blossoms ; for in the list of plants for indoor cultivation, blue is less common than red and yellow. Another capital quality which belongs to the African Lily is this, it requires no window space during winter, but may be set on one side, in an unused room, or even a cellar, anywhere, in fact, where it will be dry and guarded against frost ; or it may be kept in the sitting-room or conservatory throughout the year, still allowing it to go very dry during winter.

But beyond all these Lilies glowing with colour and recognizable by all who can distinguish one flower from another, there is one more lily which few would take to belong to so bright and gorgeous a family. In this again we may liken the flowers and plants to the human family, for even among the latter do we not see families of handsome, strong, and instantly attractive boys and girls, while almost unnoticed, certainly not seeming to be a part of them, is a poor, pale, diminutive creature, whose mean appearance and homely manner are only remarkable from the contrast they present to the glowing health and beauty of the others ?

Such a part does the *Aspidistra elatior*, (*Fig. 4*) play among the lilies. It is a lily, with so few of the popular characteristic of these plants, that none save experts would take it to belong to the family, yet though it boast no gorgeous flowers, nor fragrant perfume to attract attention, it takes to perfection the character of the homely, common, useful member of the family, and one of its more gorgeous sisterhood had better be spared from a collection of town window plants than our *Aspidistra*, for it bears an abundant wealth of Dracæna-like foliage, remains green all [the year and flourishes, and grows and increases with a very minimum of care.

It certainly flowers, but the blooms are little cup-like brown flowers which grow at the base of the stem, inconspicuous, and of little account : it is useful for the foliage alone, which is ample, bright, and easily kept clean. It requires similar treatment to that advised for other lilies, but bears with patience a far greater amount of neglect. It is propagated by offsets, which come in great numbers.

In our list of Lilies, last, and least in point of size, comes the universal favorite "Lily of the Valley." To ensure early blooms, a few clumps should be obtained in early autumn, one clump in each five inch pot, (a five-inch pot it were perhaps as well to inform the uninitiated is a flower pot five inches in diameter.) As soon as potted, they should be buried in the ground. Where there is no garden, a cellar may be utilised, and the garden ground replaced by a deep wooden box full of good soil. In this the newly potted plants must be buried, and remain until a short time before they are required to bloom.

The great difficulty in flowering forced Lilies of the Valley in rooms is the dry atmosphere, but a Wardian case or Malling's patent might either be utilised for the purpose. Where these are too expensive, a large glass shade, such as is used for Ferns, might be employed to advantage. Warmth and moisture are the points to be attended to ; each pot must be surrounded by a thick layer of damp moss. The French excel in forcing the Lilies of the Valley, and large importations of clumps just bursting into bloom are brought to the English markets, beginning at Christmas and continuing for many weeks.

Young Palm trees are among some of the most elegant plants for drawing-rooms. To keep such as are hardy enough to live in sitting-rooms in health, daily washing of the foliage is necessary ; where this is considered to involve too much trouble, their cultivation should not be attempted.

Among those which may be employed in household decoration, are *Acanthophœnix Crinita*, *Cocos Weddelliana*, *Corypha Australis*, the hardy Fan Palm of Australia, *Ptychosperma Alexandræ*, and *Phœnix Reclinata*. These are all ordinary ornamental Palms, very beautiful and very easily grown, with regular attention to their wants. We have only two objections to these really beautiful plants. The first is that we know of no English easily learnt household names for them, and the second is, that they are so commonly employed for dinner table and ball-room decorations, that we know the stereotyped style of Floral embellishment that will greet us at each evening party we go to, as well as if it were made up of artificial plants, lent out, like the plate and glass, on hire for the night.

Single specimens of young Palms, growing in conservatories or rooms, are, as we have already said, when fresh, green, and healthy, charming additions to the floral furnishing of the apartment.

CHAPTER XXI.

ON CUT FLOWERS AND TABLE DECORATIONS.

For those who have a natural love for flowers—and few have not—the window garden is in towns often the only resource of the cultivator. There are great disparities to be found in window gardens, but want of success is not always due to want of skill on the part of the cultivator, it arises as often as not from the form and situation of the window itself.

The present style of building greatly favours the cultivation of plants both within doors and without.

Nothing, except a properly constructed and heated plant house, could be better for ordinary flowers than the capacious, light bay windows of well built cottages and modern villas ; in such window gardening takes its best and most satisfactory form.

There are, however, in London and some of our more ancient towns, houses that are built as though air and light were not necessaries of existence, with narrow windows, without sills either inside or out ; these are the very rooms which most require brightening up with flowers, but these it is which are in general barren of all attempts at floral ornament. Unpromising as the situation is, and unlikely though it might be that plants would thrive in such uncongenial quarters, still a compromise is possible ; and where a flower garden of growing plants cannot be formed with any hope of success, a very

pleasing arrangement may be made with Ferns and cut flowers.

Among the great numbers of hardy and half hardy Ferns now brought to market, many will grow in rooms with a very slight amount of care, the essential points to be ensured being suitable soil, thorough drainage, ample supplies of water when needed, either in summer or winter. The atmosphere of a living room with a constant fire soon becomes too dry for Ferns, unless they are kept watered over head as well as at the roots.

Ferns tastefully arranged on an occasional table in a window, may have a vase, or vases of cut flowers, introduced among them to impart warmth and colour. Almost any bright flowers that can be obtained in sufficient quantity will do for the purpose, some are especially suitable, from the length of time they retain their beauty. *Myosotis Palustris*, the charming traditional Forget-me-not of our river banks, and *Caltha Palustris*, the marsh Marigold of our fields, are among these latter. They grow in damp, indeed, wet places, and when the stems are cut, and placed in water, the buds will continue to expand ; and if the water is renewed as often as required, they will remain in beauty for three weeks, or longer.

Daffodils are very suited to the same purpose. The single wild one is quite as pretty in such a position as the double garden variety ; in fact there is a long list of wildlings that serve the purpose of cut flowers, and last quite as long in beauty as garden and greenhouse favourites.

The wild yellow Iris of sluggish streams and pools is magnificent as a cut flower. It may be used with foliage alone, or it may be intermingled with the ordinary blue

Iris of our gardens. There are many shades of colour among the varieties of Iris Germanica. White, or rather pearly grey, and blue are the most commonly seen, but they range through all shades of blue and purple, then from golden yellow to deep bronze, mauve, in fact more than we can specify; but they are all beautiful, and of splendid effect when employed in masses as cut flowers.

In grouping flowers and foliage for any decorative purpose whatever, whether it be to fill a single vase for the study, or many receptacles of divers shapes and sizes for the decoration of magnificently appointed dinners and suppers, one point must not be forgotten, that the best effect is always to be obtained by a monotone. No matter what the prevailing colour, whether blue, red, orange, or even white, one is as beautiful as the other, if tastefully arranged with foliage. In some instances two colours may be effectively employed, as for instance monthly or other delicate pink Roses and blue Forget-me-nots, Honeysuckle and Forget-me-nots, Wild Hawthorn and Forget-me-not, Honeysuckle and Hawthorn make a charming combination, so do Roses and Honeysuckle; the great point to be avoided is glaring contrasts of colour, and a frittering away of beauty by an admixture of different flowers, which are each beautiful singly, but massed together in vases and bouquets, without any artistic, discriminating taste in the arrangement, only appear like pretty weeds.

Such floral decorations were much more general in our young days. We retain a very vivid recollection of the *Posies* the north country farmers' wives used to bring to market on the top of the baskets of early Goose-

berries. Bouquet was a word not yet introduced into the vocabulary of these homely folk, the artistic worship of Lilies and Sunflowers had not then been evolved out of some æsthetic brain. A Posy was a collection of the old fashioned simple flowers of the homestead garden, while a *nosegay* represented the fine exotics of the greenhouse and conservatory.

Such wonderful things as these Posies were, too: great bunches of Wallflowers, Pinks, Bachelor's Buttons, Polyanthus, Columbines, Rose Campion, called in their vernacular, "*Lambs' lugs*." (We may as well explain that *lugs* is the north country word for ears, and that the Rose Campion has, no doubt, gained its not very elegant appellation from the character of the foliage, which is covered with white down, and does, in fact, much resemble lambs' ears in its general character.) Every handful of flowers that was to form a market posy was backed up with greenery, no matter what its form or tint; Rosemary was commonly used for the purpose, Sage was not always despised. From such bouquets we have taken out bunches of Lemon and common Thyme, and many other sweet herbs; the sellers' object being to get as many posies made up each Friday evening as she possibly could, out of the limited number of flowers in her garden. A dozen meant a silver shilling in the gudewife's pocket, and shillings, we cannot help thinking, were more dearly prized in those days; but if the maker up was clever in getting much out of little, the purchaser was no less practised in detecting at a glance those posies which had a disproportionate amount of "padding," and many a friendly discussion went on as to whether it was fair to put into a bunch of flowers such a very large amount of "green stuff."

The friendly strife generally ended by the purchaser getting the flowers for a penny, this was the received market price, but twopence was always asked at the commencement of sale ; the farmer's wife generally concluded by saying she couldn't haggle over a penny, for "th' maister would be coming home from th' hay market, and he must not be kept waiting one minute." She was reckoned a bad saleswoman, indeed, who had not disposed of the whole of her wares, eggs, butter, curds, fruit, or flowers before mid-day, and the laggard housewife who did not reach the market before that hour had to go to the shops, and was fain to do without fresh country produce for one week at least.

The fresh, pleasant faces of the comely Lancashire witches, as they sat behind their improvised stalls set out with baskets of delicate butter, great cabbage-leaves full of fresh curd, and dozens of clean, new-laid eggs, were in themselves as pleasant a picture as one need wish to look upon, and it lingers the more lovingly in the memory from the fact that we ne'er shall look upon the like again. The days when farmers' wives and daughters stood in the weekly market are of the past, so, too, are the posies flattened out like fans, and the vases of a similar shape, which stood at each corner of the mantel-piece to receive them.

In the way of arranging flowers and foliage, we have certainly gone on to better things. The frightful staring china vases, gaudily painted with unmeaning misrepresentations of flowers and fruit, have disappeared with the posies that were just of a form to stand upright in them ; and if we sometimes mock at the artistic mania which first taught us to discard the false and vulgar for the true and beautiful, we still are ready

to acknowledge that we owe to it much of the present taste, which prefers simple beauty to mere lavish display. But to return to our cut flowers. Whatever the blossoms employed there must be a ground-work of foliage, and this should, where possible, be in keeping with the nature of the flowers.

Our first floral decoration of the year, culled from the open ground, almost invariably consists of Snowdrops, and the young leaves of the wild Parsnip, known locally as Cow Parsley. The foliage is very fernlike in growth, and forms, we think, a fitting *entourage* for the Snowdrops, which are gathered from the same meadow where the wild Parsnip flourishes.

Our earliest bunch of Daffodils is set in an epergne on a basis of wild arum leaves; the common lords and ladies, or Cuckoo point or pint, of the village children.

The deeply-lobed foliage of one of our commonest Ranunculuses is invaluable as a setting for almost any flower. We use it largely in the primrose season. It is of a deep green, often spotted with brown, and towards midsummer the whole leaf becomes tinged with a deep bronzy tint.

The various shades of orange, yellow, and red, merging by imperceptible degrees into each other, in our garden Nasturtiums are magnificent for table decoration, combined with the autumn foliage of the Virginia Creeper, as it changes from green to vivid scarlet: they form in combination the richest and most gorgeous floral decoration for the dinner table, and one which is within the reach of everybody.

In the spring, the bright golden blossoms of the Coltsfoot combined with suitable foliage makes a

seasonable decoration, and one that has much of the brightness of the young year about it.

A bunch of wood Anemones, surrounded by its own leaves, makes a charming vase, or epergne; in fact, we might cull from our woods and lanes, during a summer ramble, more beautiful flowers and foliage than we should be able to employ for decorative purposes on our return home. And if uncultivated nature provides us with so many, the garden does no less, not, perhaps, in such abundant quality, but in greater variety of shades, so that by employing them we can have greater change.

The fashion of placing flowers and the form of the receptacles in which they are placed are changed or modified each season, but it is well to bear in mind that all the flowers should be as lasting as possible. Ephemeral blooms that drop their petals almost as soon as they are cut are worthless, however beautiful. The flowers and foliage should be lightly placed in the glass, and should two colours be used, the one should lighten up, not detract from the other; also, there should be more foliage than flowers.

We remember to have seen a table at a flower show, laid out by a nobleman's gardener, of which the decoration consisted of cut roses of all shades. These were set in sand in small glasses made for the purpose. The effect was heavy and laboured, and only caused one to regret that so many lovely flowers should have been wasted on anything so ugly. The first prize was taken by a lady for a light, elegant, airy—if we may so employ the term—arrangement of half-opened China Roses, Forget-me-nots, and Maiden-hair Ferns. The greater number of the flowers were in glasses about as long

and thick as a finger ; there was a plain glass epergne with the same flowers for the centre piece.

We give these as being the extremes of two styles. Any modification of them can be made according to individual taste, and the means of satisfying it at command.

CHAPTER XXII.

HOUSETOPO GARDENS.

THE formation of the roof of the greater number of our dwellings is such as to prevent the possibility of making a garden on it, but every here and there are houses differently constructed, with flat surfaces, leaded over, and gutters to carry off the rain, these are the very places for housetop gardens, airy elevated spots, not the least of their charms being that they are beyond the ken of idle passers by.

Numbers of our hardier garden plants will grow in pots and boxes in these lofty pleasure grounds, and may be made a very bower of greenery by the aid of such rapid-growing plants as Virginia Creeper, Ivy, &c. Bright flowers, too, will expand their blooms, and sweet scented ones diffuse their fragrance even in neighbourly contact with London chimneys. Such a garden is no chimera of an imaginative brain, it is in many parts of London an actual fact; such a garden was for some time, a pleasing daily point of observation, and an evidence of what perseverance can accomplish with small means.

The houses in Bloomsbury are pretty closely packed together, and we learn that one housetop garden was situated at the top of a model-lodging house in that district. We can well believe it was not in the airiest

part of that district, nor in a position particularly pleasant to plant life, yet in this unpromising spot care and industry had reared a veritable garden of flowers and foliage, and made the otherwise unsightly leads a really pretty place to contemplate. We did not see the process of creating this garden, we only saw it when the plants were fully grown, and in flower, and the following made up as near as we can remember the list: First, as being about the last thing we should have expected to see in such a garden, was a fine plant of maize, its splendid ribbon like foliage looking as fresh and green as any grown in Hyde Park, three or four really tall handsome annual sunflowers in full bloom and fine foliage, Creeping Jenny—the ever popular, ubiquitous Creeping Jenny—was in abundance, two or three plants of Scarlet Geranium, the same of Musk and Lobelia, with two or three boxes of Mignonette, completed a display of which the cultivator had a right to be proud.

If so much could be done in such a place, what might not be effected with larger means? We will not go so far as a writer in *Once a Week*, some twenty years since, who suggested that every residence in London might have a glass structure on the top, and that by some mechanical contrivance the lady of the house should water her plants, not by hand, but by art without labour, a process as easy as ringing a bell, doing the work at once.

The writer, we imagine, must have had strange notions respecting the cultivation of flowers if he imagined that mere periodical showers, given to all plants alike, would ensure their well-being. Nor can we imagine any great amount of pleasure to be

obtained by the practice of an art which would, under such circumstances, be merely mechanical. By all means let us have plant-houses, and fruit-houses, too, on the tops of our dwellings, if possible ; but let the living plants be trained into beauty and productiveness by the thoughtful and discriminating care of a gardener, *with a mind*.

The same imaginative writer proceeds to speak of the dinner-parties, supper-parties, and open-air dinners (afternoon-tea was not, at that time) that might be given in these gardens ; and goes on to say, “ nothing could be conceived more beautiful than the enormous expanse of London-roofs covered with shrubs and flowers.” Perhaps so, but the writer quite forgets to tell us how such a grand conception is to be realized in actual fact. Nor, when he talks of roofing London with glass-houses, does he ever take into account the expenditure involved in such a change.

Such Utopian ideas are very well in print, but at present we may content ourselves with house-top gardens of more modest pretensions, taking, as a guide as to what will grow, the list of plants given previously for town areas, bearing in mind the fact that whereas plants in areas are liable to get less air than is necessary for their health, plants on house-tops are just as likely to get more than is good for them.

To prevent the tenderer plants being cut by the wind, it is a good plan to surround the roof with a fencing of rather fine octagon wire ; up this Ivy and Virginia-Creeper can be trained. It forms a pretty verdant screen, and affords a slight protection for Geraniums and similar half-hardy plants.

Where expense is no object, green-houses on the roof

are as useful as elsewhere. In them anything will grow that would grow in any similar structure on the ground, and we have read of grapes and strawberries grown to perfection in such a house on the roof of a dwelling, either in, or near, Cheapside.

CHAPTER XXIII.

USE AND ORNAMENT.

In the long list of plants capable of being grown in rooms, there are a few which may be considered useful as well as ornamental. It is true they are not often cultivated in windows, but this is a small matter; there are dozens of beautiful things we seldom see in such a position, but it is only want of knowledge of their capabilities that prevents their general cultivation, not any innate unfitness of the plant for such a situation.

Many persons appreciate the Tomatoe, the *Solanum Lycopersicum*, as a vegetable or fruit, in whichever light they choose to regard, but few are aware that Tomatoes may be grown in the sunny window. We have, however, grown them in this position, and where two or three plants only are required, they serve the purpose admirably. The great bar to their general growth in such a position is that they require a large space, and it is necessary to train them on sticks, somewhat in a fan shape, as was so often the plan with large pots of musk, and no doubt still is in many places. We do not approve of this manner of training plants in windows, for the inmates get all the back view, the sticks and ties and props, while the passer by enjoys the pretty prospect of leaf and flower, and, in the case of our useful plants, the fruit also. Nevertheless, if it has its dis-

advantages, it has its good points also ; and though we do not like it in the window garden of the drawing-room or breakfast parlour, it is appropriate and pretty in the kitchen, and we who would wish to see flowers and plants wherever they can be grown to advantage, cannot overlook the claims of the kitchen window to be beautified as far as possible.

As a rule the temperature of the kitchen is, if high, the most equable of any room in the dwelling. The early riser may ascertain this fact for herself, by going down-stairs, on a very cold, frosty morning, into the kitchen, and then into the drawing room or dining room ; she will find a most appreciable and agreeably higher temperature in the kitchen, which from the constant fires necessitated by the culinary requirements, never has time to become cold.

This much to prove that kitchen windows are capital coigns of 'vantage for plants requiring heat, but plants that like heat generally want a proportionate amount of water, and the Tomatoe is no exception to the rule. It absorbs moisture largely by leaves and roots, takes it in at the pores, like Joey Ladle, and will not brook any neglect in this respect. Its flaccid shoots and drooping foliage are a ready reminder that it has been left too long without a drink, that thirst has gone on to faintness. This should never be permitted, it weakens the plant and delays the ripening of the fruit. To keep the foliage clean, water with a fine rose or very gentle syringing. The tops of the shoots must be nipped out as they grow, to throw the plant into bearing.

The Aubergine, or Egg plant, is as easily cultivated as the Tomatoe and exacts the same conditions ; as, how-

ever, it is of more shrubby growth and dwarfer habit, it may find a place in the ordinary window. When in fruit it is highly ornamental, especially the bronzy purple variety. The white is a well-known old sort. There is, we believe, a scarlet fruited plant, which must be handsomer than either of the former; but we have not yet grown it, and cannot, therefore, answer for its being sufficiently hardy for house cultivation.

Capsicums are also very ornamental plants for the window, where, if the atmosphere is sufficiently warm, their large pendant seed pods will become brilliant scarlet or bright orange; they will continue to flourish throughout the winter in the warmth of a room or conservatory. Where any are grown in the open garden, the plants may be potted up in the autumn and employed in the houses for ornamental purposes during the coldest season of the year. In the open garden the seed pods seldom change colour, they remain of a deep dark green; but the plants, if brought into the warmth of the house, seldom fail to perfect their growth.

Still another useful and ornamental window flower, the Indian Cress, the common Nasturtium of our gardens. The seeds of this plant, picked while green, make, as many housewives are aware, an excellent pickle. We allude to this here, not so much for the value set upon the young seeds, as for the fact, that if these are picked off daily the flowering of the plant will continue for a much longer period.

The last named is, as is well known, a hardy annual; the three former half-hardy annuals. They should be sown under a glass, from three to five seeds in a pot, and transplanted singly when three or four inches high; they all require similar light rich soil and plenty of drainage.

CHAPTER XXIV.

RUSTIC JARDINIÈRES.

SHOULD the exigencies of household horticulture require more space than is afforded by the ordinary elegant, but rather small plant receptacles at the present in vogue—small villas and cottages—any residence in fact, not too grandly built nor severely furnished, may have the plants grown in stands or *jardinières* of rustic work. These commend themselves to the economical gardener. They are easily constructed by any amateur, they minimise the trouble and attention required to keep them in health, and are in themselves fresh and pretty.

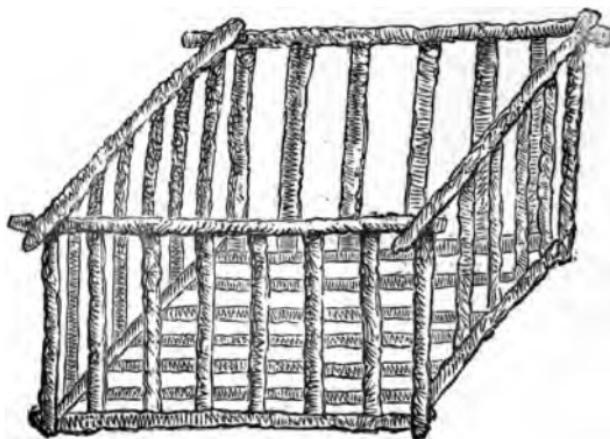


FIG. 5.

Jardinières, or flower stands, may be made of any available wood. Barked oak branches are, perhaps, the most suitable and durable; however, the loppings of birch, elm, beech, or, indeed, any hard-wooded tree with the bark on may be used with advantage; but should the bark be removed, the wood should never undergo the inartistic process of varnishing. A stain, which can be easily and cheaply procured, similar in colour to the bark of the tree, is far preferable, harmonizing much better with the contents of the stand.

On no account should shining, sticky varnish be used, which, did it ever look well, is soon spoilt by the continual moisture.

These *jardinières* made be made of any size, shape, or design; they may be large, small, round, oval, square, or what-not, to stand on a table, or on a support of rustic wood work, or be suspended, filled with hanging plants, in windows or greenhouses. Where it is impossible to obtain the above mentioned branches, very elegant flower-stands may be made with old tea chests, the boxes in which the Schiedam is imported from Holland, or boxes in which fruit is sent over from France and the Channel Isles.

Excellent stands for the outdoor garden may be made of these, and covered with arabesque, or other designs in split cane, or, what is even prettier, with the smaller branches and ripe cones of the common fir, the bark, which is of a light, warm brown colour, being left on the wood.

The rustic stands or hanging baskets, made with sides of open trellis work or bars, should be lined with moss, or, what is much better, when they can be procured, sods of close growing grass, free from dandelions

and other large weeds. These should be placed in the stand or basket, with the green side outwards. The temperature of the room causes the grass to grow rapidly and fine, and as it pushes through the interstices of the woodwork it will require periodically clipping with a sharp pair of scissors. It soon forms a delicate green ground from which the brown wood stands out in bold relief.

Thus finished, these stands may be filled with pots of growing plants, the spaces between the pots and the soil side of the sods being filled tightly in with green moss, and the surface soil being covered with it, which serves to retain sufficient moisture round the plants, a great benefit in the dry, heated atmosphere of an ordinary sitting room; or the stand, after the sods are placed in position, may be filled with rich, light soil, and plants out of pots grown in it.



FIG. 6.

In such contrivances we have grown Hyacinths, Crocuses, Primroses, the pretty, wild spotted Orchis, the Ivy Geranium, Lobelia, Musk, &c. These things not only lived but flourished, the Primroses taken from

their native copse, covered with flower buds, expanded beautifully, and were again in flower as early as the following Christmas Day.

To keep the plants in health, the stand should be taken from the room once a week, and thoroughly saturated by placing it in a deep pan or other vessel half full of water, and well washed from all dust and impurities by water of as near as possible the same temperature as the air of the room from which the flower stand was taken. When the whole has received a complete soaking, it must be stood to drain, and replaced in its proper position as soon as every drop of surplus water has drained out, which will be in about half an hour.

For any one who desires to have a permanent display of flowers in a sitting room, we would suggest a novel and portable *jardinière*—our own design—which could be made by any ordinary carpenter, and this is how it should be constructed; the top of circular form, of common, *well-seasoned*, rather thick deal; three legs made in the form, now so much the fashion for gipsy tables, but they must be made of the natural wood, unstained and unvarnished. Oak wood is best, being very hard, strong, and sufficiently dark in colour not to make the legs obtrusively light.

Around the outer edge of the top of the table a border of rustic work should be fixed, this may be oak, fir, birch, or hazel. The wood, split or whole, should be sufficiently thick to bear hard wear, but not to give an appearance of clumsiness. The most simple pattern is diamond trellis, and each piece of wood should be screwed on with a fine screw, the head of which may be stained the colour of the wood.

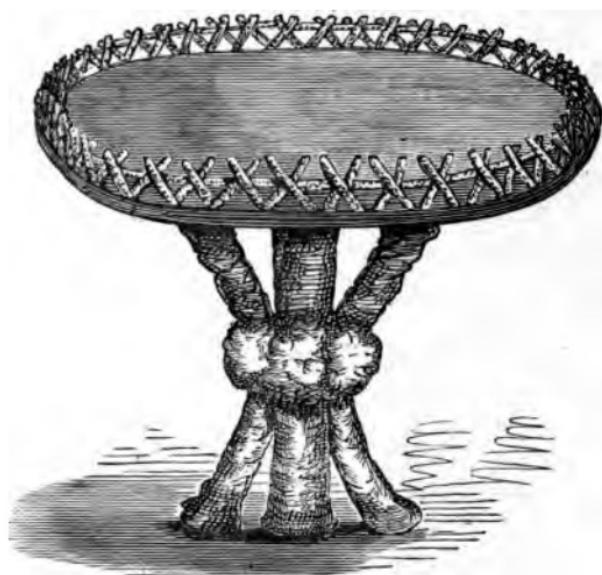


FIG. 7.

If preferred, light wicker work may be employed, and an ornamental wicker handle placed over from side to side, to give the appearance of a basket. Wicker work is necessarily more expensive and not so strong as wood, but for a small table in a drawing-room would appear lighter. Within the trellis a pretty thick layer of long moss should be laid, the plants being arranged in a group, and the interstices filled up with moss, and a layer of the same placed over the surface of the whole. When completed, the plants would have the appearance of growing in the moss, the pots being entirely hidden.

The advantage of such an arrangement as this is, that the whole—plants, table and all—can be carried out of the room with ease by two people; it can then

be placed out of doors during suitable weather, or in a scullery or other convenient place in cold weather, and thoroughly saturated with water, as well as being watered over the whole of the foliage. This can be done at convenient moments, at the weekly thorough cleaning of the apartment, for instance ; after the water has ceased dripping, the table and its occupants can be returned to the room perfectly refreshed and re-invigorated.

The moss will prevent the too rapid evaporation of moisture induced by the air of a sitting-room, and thus treated once a week, during a hot summer the plants will not require any other watering. Should the foliage get a little dusty in the interval, this may be wiped off with a wet sponge.

CHAPTER XXV.

ON SUITABLE FERTILISERS.

ONE of the greatest difficulties in the cultivation of household plants by amateurs is to know how and when to supply that artificial stimulus to luxuriant growth which becomes so necessary in such an artificial state of existence.

Of late years, however, science has stepped in to the aid of the window-gardener, and many manures in concentrated form are manufactured especially for pot-plants. Before, however, employing any of these artificial aids to growth, health and strength should be as fully as possible ensured by placing the plant, whatever its nature or requirements, in circumstances that will conduce to its healthy growth and development. This can only be done by studying and understanding each plant—or, rather, class of plants—that comes under cultivation.

There are necessarily certain main features of management in window-gardening, as in any other department of horticultural art; but in the open ground each branch of work is treated separately and individually at certain seasons; and as the window, or conservatory, may be looked upon as a garden in miniature, we may, instead of treating it in branches, treat each plant separately, according to its individual

requirements. Thus, although we may consider that Roses, as a whole, require a large amount of manure, it still is necessary to discriminate between those varieties which are so gross in growth as to absorb almost any amount and those more tender varieties which, although they may assimilate a very large quantity—far more than would be injurious, say, to a Lily—yet, require less than the free-growing sort.

For example, the liquid manure, which only strengthens the foliage and expedites the flowering of Monthly Roses in pots, will almost, if not quite, kill delicate Tea Roses in a similar situation.

It is a safe plan for amateurs to ascertain what compost or admixture of soil is best suited to the plant that has to be potted, and to give it every advantage at starting, even though it may be at the cost of some trouble.

In the chapters devoted to different plants, we have already specified the best description of soil in which to grow them ; we need not, therefore, repeat it here ; but among the more ordinary occupants of the window are many popular plants, so little exacting in their requirements that they will grow in anything at all approaching fertile soil, and for these it is well to bear in mind the following lines from the Georgics of Virgil :

“ The fatter earth by handling we may find
With ease distinguished from the meagre kind ;
Poor soil will crumble into dust, the rich
Will to the fingers cleave like clammy pitch.”

Even this graphic description must, however, be accepted *cum grano salis*, for soil that reaches such a

pitch—so to speak—of clamminess, would be rather beyond the mark. Good soil should not be dusty, that is certain ; it should be dark in colour, moist to the touch, and sufficiently loamy to have a certain consistence or adhesiveness.

In such soil plants will grow for a considerable time without artificial manure ; when the latter is required for pot plants, the least objectionable form in which to apply it is liquid.

In this way numerous patent manures, put up in handy tins, bottles, or bags, and labelled with full instructions for use, may be employed. Guano may also be given, one ounce to two gallons of water. Bone dust is another excellent fertiliser for plants in pots. Prepared peat charcoal has been found an admirable material in which to grow bulbs. Powdered charcoal is also very good for mixing with the soil. Soapy water—the slops from the house, in fact—may be used with advantage, adding more water, in the proportion of six to one—that is, six of clear water (rain water if available) to one of slops ; this is an excellent manure, easily obtained by everybody, easily applied, and not likely to injure any plants ; it leaves the surface soil somewhat unsightly, but this is soon got rid of by stirring the earth with a pointed stick.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ON WATERING.

In dry weather, when watering is a very important matter, it should be borne in mind that a good soaking once a week or so—a soaking that penetrates thoroughly, the water finding its way to every part of the root of the plant—is most beneficial, but that watering a little every day or so, giving homœopathic doses, is an operation much better left alone, for much more harm than good is likely to result from such a practice, inasmuch as watering in such quantity as to moisten the surface, only causes growth of fibres near the top, the slight moisture not being sufficient to nourish them, but, on the contrary, the young, tender growth of fibres, being within reach of the burning sun, must result in exhaustion to the plant. Water, therefore, should at all times be administered with a liberal hand, that it may soak and percolate through thoroughly, as a long shower of rain will do ; the growth of roots will thus be encouraged in their natural position, going deeper and deeper after the nourishment they affect, and they will so be enabled to withstand any occasional neglect ; not that neglect should ever befall window-gardens, for the smaller the area to be attended and the more concentrated the means, the better should be the effect.

Window-gardening is, as it were, Horticulture in a nutshell ; and as neatness and care are never so well

seen as in small places, so are the results of judicious plant-growing never more advantageously shown than in window-gardening.

But in the practice of this as of all other arts, knowledge is the best guide.

Watering in wholesale fashion is perhaps more destructive to plants grown in pots than anything else. Almost all plants have seasons when they require very little water; almost all plants have certain times when they require a great amount. The former is the period of imperceptible growth, when the plant is said, technically, to be at rest—at that season, in fact, when nature is said to sleep. The greater number of plants require very little water during winter, when they live, but can scarcely be said to grow. They want as a rule a large amount of moisture during the hot summer months, when they are making growth rapidly and developing their flowers. But although this may be taken as the broad basis for watering, distinctions still remain to be made; for some plants flower even in winter, and will then require much water, while some should be left for a time almost dry, to cause them to throw up the flower spike—the Vallota, for instance, the particular care of which is alluded to in the chapter on Lilies.

Succulents, again, will go through a severe winter unharmed, when left entirely without water, but absorb a large amount when they are forming and expanding their flowers.

Rain-water is the best, as it is the only natural moisture for plants; and where there is any possibility of storing it, even in small quantities, it should be reserved for watering and washing plants.

After rain-water, the softest water that can be ob-

tained is best; water fresh pumped or drawn from a cold spring is the worst. Where there is no soft water to be obtained, a quantity sufficient for the requirements of the plants being grown should be drawn from the tap overnight and left in the warm atmosphere of a kitchen, or other convenient place, ready for use when required, or a little hot water may be added to cold to bring it up to the desired temperature. Cold water should never be given when the plants are growing in a warm room; the warmth of the water must approximate as nearly as possible to the warmth of the atmosphere.

In watering and cleansing the foliage of plants, the same rule as to avoiding perfectly cold water applies.

After being sponged with soap and water, the plants should be washed immediately after with clear water, and even when syringed, or showered over from the rose of a watering pot, it is desirable the water shall not be so cold as to chill the plants, as it were. A cold douche may be invigorating enough to humanity, but it is often death to plants.

THE END.



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